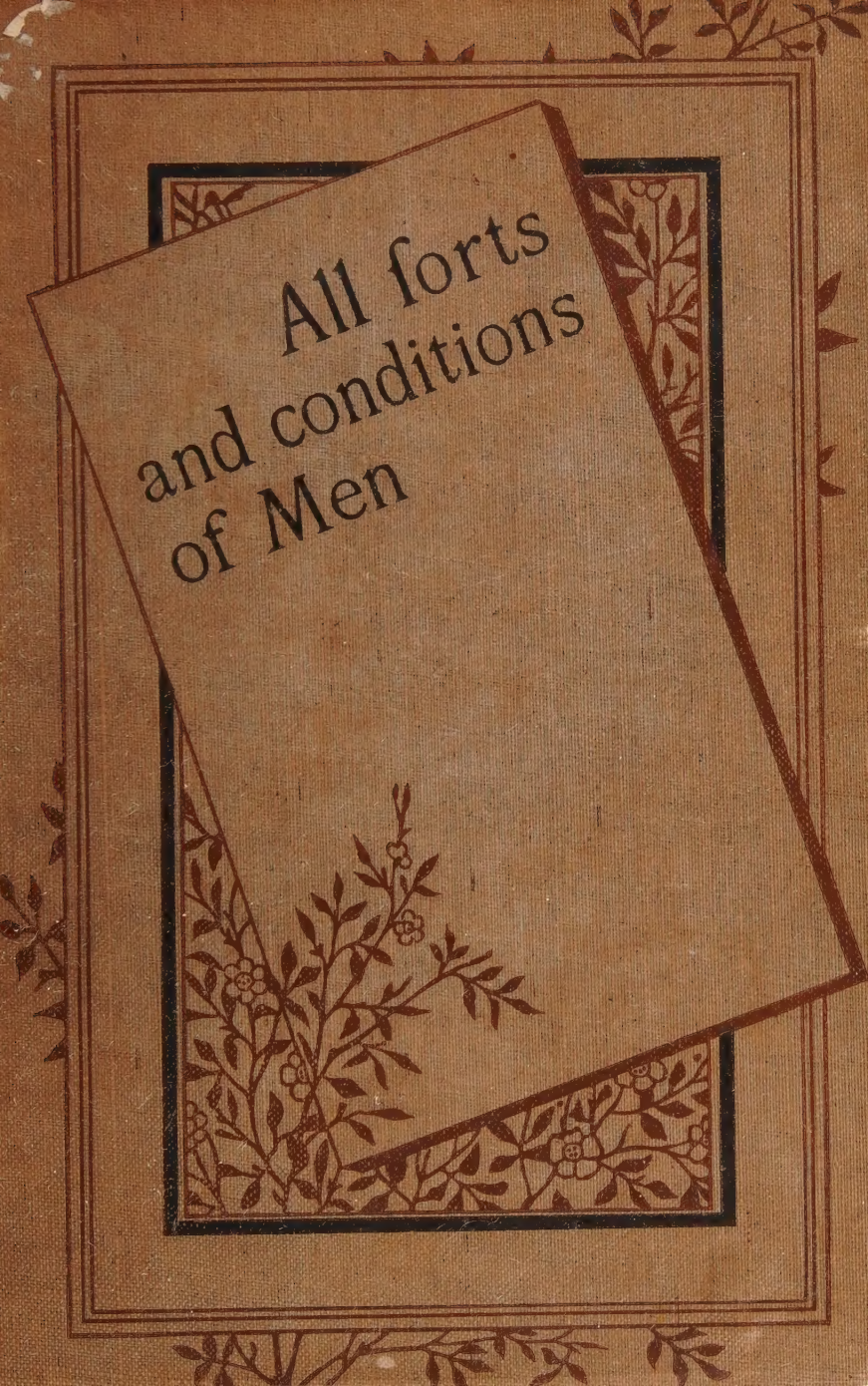


All sorts
and conditions
of Men





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ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN

VOL. III.

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AND PARLIAMENT STREET



“I am—the—the dressmaker.”

ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN

An Impossible Story

BY

WALTER BESANT



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED. BARNARD

IN THREE VOLUMES—VOL. III.

London

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1882

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ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MR. BUNKER'S LETTER.

Two days after this, Angela received a very wonderful letter. It was addressed to Miss Messenger, and was signed Benjamin Bunker. It ran as follows:—

‘Honoured Miss,—As an old and humble friend of your late lamented grandfather, whose loss I can never recover from nor has it yet been made up to me in any way’—Angela laughed—‘I venture to address you the following lines in secrecy and confidence knowing that what ought not to be concealed should be told in the proper quarter, which is you Miss and none other.

‘Everybody in these parts knows me;

everybody knows Bunker, your grandfather's right-hand man; wherefore, what I write is no other design than to warn you and to put you on your guard against the deceitful and such as would abuse your confidingness, being but young as yet, and therefore ignorant of dodges, and easy come round.

‘You have been come round, and that in such a shameful way that I cannot bear myself any longer, and must take the liberty of telling you so, being an old and confidential adviser; your grandfather used to say that even the Brewery wouldn't be where it is now, if it hadn't been for me, not to speak of the house property which is now a profitable investment with rents regular and respectable tenants, whereas before I took it in hand, the houses was out of repair, the rents backward and the tenants too often such as would bring discredit on any estate. I therefore beg to warn you against two persons—young, I am sorry to say, which makes it worse, because it is only the old who should be thus depraved—whom you have benefited and they are unworthy of it.

‘One of them is a certain Miss Kennedy, a dressmaker, at least she says so. The other is, I write this with the blush of indignant shame, my own nephew, whose name is Harry Goslett.’

‘Bunker, Bunker!’ murmured Angela, ‘is this fair to your own tenant and your own nephew?’

‘As regards my nephew, you have never inquired about him, and it was out of your kindness and a desire to mark your sense of me that you gave him a berth in the Brewery. That young man, Miss, who calls himself a cabinet-maker and doesn’t seem to know that a joiner is one thing and a cabinet-maker another, now does the joinery for the Brewery, and makes, I am told, as much as two pound a week, being a handy chap. If you had asked me first, I should have told you that he is a lazy, indolent, free and easy, disrespectful, dangerous young man. He has been no one knows where; no one knows where he has worked, except that he talks about America; he looks like a betting man; I believe he drinks of a night: he has been living like a gentleman,

doing no work, and I believe, though up to the present I haven't found out for certain, that he has been in trouble and knows what is a convict's feelings when the key is turned. Because he is such a disgrace to the family, for his mother was a Coppin and came of a respectable Whitechapel stock, though not equal to the Bunkers or the Messengers, I went to him and offered him five-and-twenty pound out of my slender stock to go away and never come back any more to disgrace us. Five-and-twenty pound I would have given to save Messenger's Brewery from such a villain.'

'Bunker, Bunker—' murmured Angela again.

'But he wouldn't take the money. You thought to do me a good turn and you done yourself a bad one. I don't know what mischief he has already done in the Brewery and perhaps he is watched; if so it may not yet be too late. Send him about his business. Make him go. You can then consider some other way of making it up to me for all that work for your grandfather whereof you now sweetly reap the benefit.

‘The other case, Miss, is that of the young woman, Kennedy by name, the dressmaker.’

‘What of her, Bunker?’ asked Angela.

‘I hear that you are givin’ her your custom, not knowing, maybe, the kind of woman she is nor the mischief she’s about. She’s got a house of mine on false pretences.’

‘Really, Mr. Bunker,’ said Angela, ‘you are too bad.’

‘Otherwise I wouldn’t let her have it, and at the end of the year out she goes. She has persuaded a lot of foolish girls, once contented with their lowly lot and thankful for their wages and their work, nor inclined to grumble when hours was long and work had to be done. She has promised them the profits and meantime she feeds them up so that their eyes swell out with fatness, she gives them short hours and sends them out into the garden to play games. Games, if you please, and short hours for such as them. In the evening it’s worse; for then they play and sing and dance, having young men to caper about with them, and you can hear them half a mile up the Mile End Road so that it is a scandal to

Stepney Green, once respectable, and the police will probably interfere. Where she came from, who she was, how she got her money, we don't know. Some say one thing, some say another, whatever they say it's a bad way. The worst is that when she smashes as she must, because no ladies who respect virtue and humblemindedness with contentment will employ her, is that the other dressmakers and shops will have nothing to do with her girls, so that what will happen to them, no one can tell.

‘I thought it right, Miss, to give you this information, because it is certain that if you withdraw your support from these two undeserving people, they must go away, which as a respectable Stepney man, I unite in wishing may happen before long, when the girls shall go on again as before and leave dancing and singing to the rich and be humble and contented with the crust to which they were born.

‘And as regards the kindness you were meditating towards me, Miss, I think I may say that none of my nephews—one of whom is a Radical, and another a Captain in the Salva-

tion Army—deserves to receive any benefits at your hands, least of all that villain who works in the Brewery. Wherefore, it may take the form of something for myself. And it is not for me to tell you, Miss, how much that something ought to be for a man in years, of respectable station and once the confidential friend of your grandfather, and prevented thereby from saving as much as he had otherwise a right to expect.

‘I remain, Miss, Your humble Servant,
‘BENJAMIN BUNKER.’

‘This,’ said Angela, ‘is a very impudent letter. How shall we bring him to book for it?’

When she learned, as she speedily did, the great mystery about the houses and the Coppin property, she began to understand the letter, the contents of which she kept to herself for the present. This was perhaps for the theory implied rather than stated in the letter, that both should be ordered to go; for if one only was turned out of work, both would stay. This theory made her smile and blush, and pleased

her, insomuch that she was not so angry as she might otherwise have been and should have been with the crafty double-dealer who wrote the letter.

It happened that Mr. Bunker had business on Stepney Green, that morning, while Angela was reading the letter. She saw him from the window, and could not resist the temptation of inviting him to step in. He came not in the least abashed, and with no tell-tale signal of confusion in his rosy cheeks.

‘Come in, Mr. Bunker,’ said Angela. ‘Come in; I want five minutes’ talk with you. This way, please, where we can be alone.’

She led him into the refectory, because Daniel Fagg was in the drawing-room.

‘I have been thinking, Mr. Bunker,’ she said, ‘how very, very fortunate I was to fall into such hands as yours, when I came to Stepney.’

‘You were, Miss, you were. That was a fall, as one may say, which meant a rise.’

‘I am sure it did, Mr. Bunker. You do not often come to see us, but I hope you approve of our plans.’

‘As for that,’ he replied, ‘it isn’t my busi-

ness. People come to me, and I put them in the way. How they run in the way is not my business to inquire. As for you and your girls, now, if you make the concern go, you may thank me for it. If you don't, why it isn't my fault.'

'Very well put indeed, Mr. Bunker. In six months the first year, for which I prepaid the rent, will come to an end.'

'It will.'

'We shall then have to consider a fresh agreement. I was thinking, Mr. Bunker, that, seeing how good a man you are, and how generous, you would like to make your rent, like the wages of the girls, depend upon the profits of the business.'

'What?' he asked.

Angela repeated her proposition.

He rose, buttoned his coat, and put on his hat

'Rent depend on profits? Is the girl mad? Rent comes first and before anything else. Rent is even before taxes; and as for rates—but you're mad. My rent depend on profits? Rent, Miss, is sacred. Remember that.'

'Oh!' said Angela.

‘ And what is more,’ he added, ‘ people who don’t pay up get sold up. It’s a Christian duty to sell ’em up. I couldn’t let off even my own nephews.’

‘ As for one of them, you would like to sell him up, would you not, Mr. Bunker ? ’

‘ I would,’ he replied truthfully, ‘ I should like to see him out of the place. You know what I told you when you came. Have nothing to do, I said, with that chap. Keep him at arm’s length, for he is a bad lot. Now you see what he has brought you to. Singin’, dancin’, playin’, laughin’, every night ; respectable ladies driven away from your shop ; many actually kept out of the place ; expenses doubled ; all through him. What’s more—bankruptcy ahead ! Don’t I know that not a lady in Stepney or Mile End comes here ? Don’t I know that you depend upon your West End connection ? When that goes, where are you ? And all for the sake of that pink and white chap ! Well, when one goes, the other ’ll go too, I suppose. Rent out of profits, indeed ! No ; no, Miss, it ’ll do you good to learn a little business even if you do get sold up.’

‘Thank you, Mr. Bunker. Do you know, I do not think you will ever have the pleasure of selling me up?’

She laughed so merrily that he felt he hated her quite as much as he hated his nephew. Why, six months before, no one laughed in Stepney at all; and to think that any one should laugh at him, would have been an impossible dream.

‘You laugh,’ he said gravely, ‘and yet you are on the brink of ruin. Where’s your character? Wropped up with the character of that young man. Where’s your business? Drove away—by him. You laugh. Ah! I’m sorry for you, Miss, because I thought at one time you were a plain-spoken, honest sort of young woman: if I’d ha’ known that you meant to use my house—mine—the friend of all the respectable tradesmen—for such wicked fads as now disgrace it, I’d never ha’ taken you for a tenant.’

‘Oh! yes, you would, Mr. Bunker.’ She laughed again, but not merrily this time. ‘Oh! yes—you would. You forget the fittings and the furniture, the rent paid in advance,

and the half-crown an hour for advice. Is there anything, I should like to know, that you would not do for half-a-crown an hour?'

He made no reply.

'Why, again, do you hate your nephew? What injury has he done you, that you should bear him such ill-will?'

This, which was not altogether a shot in the dark, went straight to Mr. Bunker's heart. He said nothing, but put on his hat and rushed out. Clearly, these two between them would drive him mad.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PROOFS IN PRINT.

‘It is quite finished now,’ said Daniel Fagg, blotting the last page.

When he began to live with the dress-makers, Angela, desiring to find him some employment, had suggested that he should re-write the whole of his book, and redraw the illustrations. It was not a large book, even though it was stuffed and padded with readings of inscriptions and tablets. An ordinary writer would have made a fair copy in a fortnight. But so careful an author as Daniel, so anxious to present his work perfect and unsailable, and so slow in the mere mechanical art of writing, wanted much more than a fortnight. His handwriting, like his Hebrew, had been acquired comparatively late in life: it was therefore rather ponderous; and he had

never learned the art of writing half a word and leaving the other half to be guessed. Then there were the Hebrew words, which took a great deal of time to get right ; and the equilateral triangles, which also caused a considerable amount of trouble. So that it was a good six weeks before Daniel was ready with a fair copy of his manuscript. He was almost as happy in making this transcript as he had been with the original document, perhaps more so, because he was now able to consider his great discovery as a whole, to regard it as an architect may regard his finished work, and to touch up, ornament, and improve his translations.

‘It is quite complete,’ he repeated, laying the last page in its place and tapping the roll affectionately. ‘Here you will find the full account of the two tables of stone and a translation of their contents, with notes. What will they say to that, I wonder?’

‘But how,’ asked Angela, ‘how did the tables of stone get to the British Museum?’

Mr. Fagg considered his reply for a while.

‘There are two ways,’ he said, ‘and I don’t

know which is the right one. For either they were brought here when we, the descendants of Ephraim, as everybody knows, landed in England, or else they were brought here by Phœnician traders after the Captivity. However, there they are, as anybody may see with the help of my discovery. As for the scholars, how can they see anything? Wilful ignorance, Miss, is their sin: pride and wilful ignorance. You're ignorant, because you are a woman, and it is your nature to. But not to love darkness!'

'No, Mr. Fagg. I lament my ignorance.'

'Then there's the story of David and Jonathan, and the history of Jezebel and her great wickedness, and the life and death of King Jehoshaphat, and a great deal more. Now read for the first time from the arrow-headed character—so called—by Daniel Fagg, self-taught scholar, once shoemaker in the colony of Victoria, Discoverer of the Primitive Alphabet and the Universal Language.'

'That is indeed a glorious thing to be able to say, Mr. Fagg.'

'But now it is written, what next?'

‘You mean, how can you get it printed?’

‘Of course, that’s what I mean,’ he replied almost angrily. ‘There’s the book, and no one will look at it. Haven’t I tried all the publishers? What else should I mean?’

The old disappointment, kept under and forgotten during the excitement of rewriting the book, was making itself felt again. How much farther forward was he? The work had been finished long before; all he had done during the last six weeks was to write it afresh.

‘I’ve only been wasting my time here,’ he said querulously. ‘I ought to have been up and about. I might have gone to Oxford, where, I’m told, there are young men who would perhaps give me a hearing: or there’s Cambridge, where they have never heard of my discovery. You’ve made me waste six weeks and more.’

Angela forbore to ask him how he would have lived during those six weeks. She replied softly:—

‘Nay, Mr. Fagg: not wasted the time. You were over-worked: you wanted rest. Be-

sides, I think we may find a plan to get this book published.'

'What plan? How?'

'If you would trust the manuscript to my hands—yes; I know well how precious it is, and what a dreadful thing it would be to lose it: but you have a copy, and you can keep that while I take the other.'

'Where are you going to take it?'

'I do not know yet. To one of the publishers, I suppose.'

He groaned.

'I have been to every one of them. Not a publisher in London but has had the offer of my book. They won't have it, any of them. Oh! it's their loss, I know that—but what is it to me?'

'Will you let me try? Will you trust me with the manuscript?'

He reluctantly and jealously allowed her to take away the precious document. When it was out of his hands, he tried to amuse himself with the first copy, but found no pleasure in it at all, because he thought continually of the scorn which had been hurled upon him

and his discovery. He saw the heads of departments, one after the other, receiving him politely, and listening to what he had to say : he saw them turning impatient, interrupting him, declining to hear any more, referring him to certain books in which he would find a refutation of his theories, and finally refusing even to see him. Never was discoverer treated with such contempt. Even the attendants at the Museum took their cue from their chiefs, and received his advances with scorn. Should they waste their time—the illiterate—in listening unprofitably to one whom the learned Dr. Birch and the profound Mr. Newton had sent away with contempt? Better sit in the spacious halls, bearing the wand of office, and allowing the eyelids to fall gently, and the mind to wander away among pleasant pastures where there was drink with tobacco. Then there were the people who had subscribed. Some of them were gentlemen connected with Australia : they had tossed him the twelve and sixpence in the middle of his talk, as if to get rid of him : some of them had subscribed in pity for his poverty : some persuaded by his

importunity. There was not one among them all, he reflected with humiliation, who subscribed because he believed. Stay, there was this ignorant dressmaker : one convert out of all to whom he had explained his Discovery ! One—only one ! There have been many religious enthusiasts, prophets, preachers, holders of strange doctrines, who have converted women so that they believed them inspired of heaven : yet these men made other converts, whereas he, Fagg, had but this one, and she was not in love with him, because he was old now, and no longer comely. This was a grand outcome of that Australian enthusiasm !

That day Mr. Fagg was disagreeable, considered as a companion. He found fault with the dinner, which was excellent, as usual ; he complained that the beer was thick and flat, whereas it sparkled like champagne, and was as clear as a bell ; he was cross in the afternoon, and wanted to prevent the child who sat in the drawing-room from practising her music ; and he went out for his walk in a dark and gloomy mood.

Angela let him have his querulous way, un-

rebuked, because she knew the cause of it. He was suffering from that dreadful hopeless anger which falls upon the unappreciated. He was like some poet who brings out volume after volume, yet meets with no admirers and remains obscure: he was like some novelist who has produced a masterpiece—which nobody will read; or like some actor, the foremost of his age—who depletes the house; or like a dramatist from whose acted works the public fly; or like a man who invents something which is to revolutionise things, only people prefer their old way. Good heavens! is it impossible to move this vast inert mass called the world? Why, there are men who can move it at their will, even by a touch of their little finger; and the Unappreciated, with all their efforts, cannot make the slightest impression. This, from time to time, makes them go mad, and at such periods they are unpleasant persons to meet. They growl at their clubs, they quarrel with their blood relations, they snarl at their wives, they grumble at their servants. Daniel was having such a fit.

It lasted two whole days, and on the second

Rebekah took upon herself to lead him aside and reprove him for the sin of ingratitude, because it was very well known to all that the man would have gone to the workhouse but for Miss Kennedy's timely help. She asked him sternly, what he had done to merit that daily bread which was given him without a murmur : and what excuse he could make for his bad temper and his rudeness towards the woman who had done so much for him.

He had no excuse to make, because Rebekah would not have understood the true one. Wherefore, she bade him repent and reform, or he would hear more from her. This threat frightened him, though it could not remove his irritation and depression. But on the third day, sunshine and good cheer and hope—new hope and enthusiasm—returned to him.

For Miss Kennedy announced to him, with many smiles, that a publisher had accepted his manuscript, and that it had already been sent to the printers.

‘He will publish it for you,’ she said, ‘at no cost to yourself. He will give you as many copies as you wish to have, for presentation

among your friends and among your subscribers—you will like to send copies to your subscribers, will you not?’

He rubbed his hands and laughed aloud.

‘That,’ he said, ‘will prove that I did not eat up the subscriptions.’

‘Of course.’ Angela smiled, but did not contradict the proposition. ‘Of course, Mr Fagg; and if ever there was any doubt in your own mind about that money it is now removed, because the book will be in their hands. And all they wanted was the book.’

‘Yes—yes. And no one will be able to say . . . you know what—will they?’

‘No, no. You will have proofs sent to you——’

‘Proofs!’ he murmured. ‘Proofs in print! Will they send me proofs soon?’

‘I believe you will have the whole book set up in a few weeks.’

‘Oh! The whole book—my book—set up—in print!’

‘Yes; and if I were you, I would send an announcement of the work by the next mail to your Australian friends. Say that your dis-

covery has at length assumed its final shape and is now ripe for publication, after being laid before all the learned societies of London, and that it has been accepted by Messrs. —, the well-known publishers, and will be issued almost as soon as this announcement reaches Melbourne. Here is a slip that I have prepared for you.'

He took it with glittering eyes and stammering voice. The news seemed too good to be true.

'Now, Mr. Fagg, that this has been settled, there is another thing which I should like to propose for your consideration. Did you ever hear of that great Roman who saved his country in a time of peril and then went back to the plough?'

Daniel shook his head. 'Is there any Hebrew inscription about him?' he asked.

'Not that I know of. What I mean is this. When your volume is out, Mr. Fagg, when you have sent it—triumphantly—to all the learned societies, and all your subscribers, and all the papers and everywhere, including your Australian friends; because the publisher will let you

have as many copies as you please; would it not be a graceful thing, and a thing for future historians to remember, that you left England at the moment of your greatest fame, and went back to Australia to take up your old—occupation?’

Daniel had never considered the thing in this light, and showed no enthusiasm at the proposal.

‘When your friends in Victoria prophesied fortune and fame, Mr. Fagg, they spoke out of their hopes and their pride in you. Of course I do not know much about these things—how should I? Yet I am quite certain that it takes a long time for a learned discovery to make way. There are jealousies—you have experienced them—and unwillingness to admit new things—you have met with that too—and reluctance to unlearn old things—why, you have met with that, as well.’

‘I have,’ he said, ‘I have.’

‘As for granting a pension to a scholar, or a title, or anything of that sort, it is really never done, so that you would have to make your own living if you remained here.’

‘I thought that when the book was published people would buy it.’

Angela shook her head.

‘Oh! no. That is not the kind of book which is bought. Very few people know anything about inscriptions. Those who do will go to the British Museum and read it there. One copy will do for all.’

Daniel looked perplexed.

‘You do not go back empty-handed,’ she said. ‘You will have a fine story to tell of how the great scholars laughed at your discovery, and how you got about and told people, and they subscribed, and your book was published, and how you sent it to all of them, to show the mistake they had made, and how the English people have got the book now, to confound the scholars, and how your mission is accomplished, and you are home again to live and die among your own people. It will be a glorious return, Mr. Fagg. I envy you the landing at Melbourne, your book under your arm. You will go back to your old township; you will give a lecture in the schoolroom on your stay in England and your reception; and then you

will take up your old place again and follow your old calling exactly the same as if you had never left it, but for the honour and reverence which people will pay you.'

Daniel cooed like a dove.

'It may be,' the siren went on, 'that people will pay pilgrimages to see you in your old age. They will come to see the man who discovered the Primitive Alphabet and the Universal Language; they will say, "This is Daniel Fagg, the great Daniel Fagg, whose unaided intellect overset and brought to confusion all the scholars and showed their learning was but vain pretence; who proved the truth of the Scriptures by his reading of tablets and inscriptions, and who returned, when he had finished his task, with the modesty of a great mind to his simple calling!"'

'I will go,' said Daniel, banging the table with his fist. 'I will go as soon as the book is ready.'

CHAPTER XXXV.

‘THEN WE’LL KEEP COMPANY.’

AFTER the celebrated Debate on the Abolition of the Lords, Dick Coppin found he took, for the moment, a greatly diminished interest in burning political questions. He lost, in fact, confidence in himself, and went about with hanging head. The Sunday evening meetings were held as usual, but the fiery voice of Dick the Radical was silent, and people wondered. This was the effect of his cousin’s address upon him: as for the people, it had made them laugh, just as Dick’s had made them angry; they came to the hall to get these little emotions, and not for any personal or critical interest in the matter discussed; and this was about all the effect produced by them.

One evening the old Chartist who had taken the chair met Dick at the Club.

‘Come out,’ he said, ‘come out and have a crack while the boys wrangle.’

They walked from Redman’s Lane, where the Club stands, to the quiet side pavement of Stepney Green, deserted now, because the respectable people were all in church, and it was too cold for the lounging of the more numerous class of those who cannot call themselves respectable.

The ex-Chartist belonged, like Daniel Fagg, to the shoemaking trade in its humbler lines. The connection between Leather and Socialism, Chartism, Radicalism, Atheism, and other things detrimental to old institutions, has frequently been pointed out and need not be repeated. It is a reflecting trade, and the results of meditation are mainly influenced by the amount of knowledge the meditation begins with. In this respect, the Chartist of thirty years ago had a great advantage over his successors of the present day, for he had read; he knew the works of Owen, of Holyoake, and of Cobbett; he understood something of what he wanted and why he wanted it. The proof of which is, that they have got all they wanted

and we still survive. When next the people really make up their minds that they want another set of things, they will probably get them, too.

‘Let us talk,’ he said. ‘I’ve been thinking a bit about that chap’s speech the other night. I wanted an answer to it.’

‘Have you got one?’

‘It’s all true what he said. First of all, it’s true. The pinch is just the same whether the Liberals are in or the Tories. Government don’t help us. Why should we help them?’

‘Is that all your answer?’

‘Wait a bit, lad. Don’t hurry a man. The chap was right. We ought to co-operate, and get all he said and a deal more. And once we do begin, mind you, there’ll be astonishment. Because you see, Dick, my lad, there’s work before us. But we must be educated. We must all be got to see what we can do if we like. That chap’s clever, now. Though he looks like a swell.’

‘He’s got plenty in him; but he’ll never be one of us.’

‘If we can use him, what does it matter

whether he is one of us or not? Come to that, who is "us"? You don't pretend, before me, that you call yourself one of the common workmen, do you? That does for the Club, but between ourselves—— Why, man, you and me, we're leaders; we've got to think for 'em. What I think is—make that chap draw up a plan, if he can, for getting the people to work together. For we've got all the power at last, Dick; we've got all the power. Don't forget, when we old uns are dead and gone, who done it for you.'

He was silent for a moment. Then he went on.

'We've got what we wanted—that's true—and we seem to be no better off. That's true, too. But we *are* better off; because we *feel* that every man has his share in the rule of the nation; that's a grand thing; we are not kept out of our vote; we don't see, as we used to see, our money spent for us without having a say; that's a very grand thing which he doesn't understand; nor you neither, because you are too young. Everything we get which makes us feel our power more is good for us.

The chap was right, but he was wrong as well. Don't give up politics, lad.'

'What's the good if nothing comes?'

'There's a chance now for the working man such as he has never had before in all history. You are the lad to take that chance. I've watched you, Dick, since you first began to come to the Club. There's life in you. Lord! I watch the young fellows one after the other: they stamp and froth, but it comes to nothing: you're different: you want to be something better than a bellows—though your speech the other night came pretty nigh to the bellows kind.'

'Well—what is the chance?'

'The House, Dick. The working men will send you there if you can show them that you've got something in you. It isn't froth they want: it's a practical man with knowledge: you go on reading: go on speaking: go on debating: keep it up: get your name known: don't demean yourself: get reported and learn all that there is to learn. Once in the House, Dick, if you are not afraid——'

'I shall not be afraid——'

'Humph! well: we shall see—well: there's

your chance. A working man's candidate: one of ourselves: that's a card for you to play. But not so ignorant as your mates—eh? able, if you want, to use the swells' sneerin' talk, so's to call a man a liar without sayin' the words: to make him feel like a fool and a whipped cur with just showin' your white teeth. Learn them ways, Dick. They'll be useful.'

'But if,' said the young man, doubtfully, 'if I am to keep on debating, what subjects shall we take up at the Club?'

'I should go in for practical subjects. Say that the Club is ready to vote for the abolition of the Lords and Church, and reform of the Land Laws, when the time comes, but it hasn't come yet. You haven't got the choice of subjects that we had. Lord! what with Rotten Boroughs and the Black Book of Pensions, and younger sons and favouritism in the service—why, our hands were full.'

'What practical subjects?'

'Why, them as your cousin talked about. There's the wages of the girls; there's food, and fish, and drink; there's high rent; there's a world o' subjects. You go and find out all about them. Give up the rest for a spell and

make yourself master of all these questions. If you do, Dick, I believe your fortune is made.'

Dick looked doubtful. It seemed disheartening to be sent back to the paltry matter of wages, prices, and so on, when he was burning to lead in something great. Yet the advice was sound.

'Sometimes I think, Dick,' the old man went on, 'that the working man's best friends would be the swells, if they could be got hold of. They've got nothing to make out of the artisan; they don't run factories nor keep shops; they don't care, bless you, how high his wages are; why should they? They've got their farmers to pay the rent, and their houses, and their money in the funds; what does it matter to them? They're well brought up too, most of them, civil in their manner, and disposed to be friendly if you're neither stand-offish nor familiar, but know yourself and talk accordin'.

'If the swells should ever come to us, we ought to go to them. Remember that, Dick. Very soon there will be no more questions of

Tory and Liberal, but only what is the best thing for us. You play your game by the newest rules ; as for the old ones, they've seen their day.'

Dick left him, but he did not return to the Club. He communed beneath the stars, turning over these and other matters in his mind. Yes, the old man was right ; the old indignation times were over ; the long lists of crimes which the political agitator could bring against King, Church, Lords, and Commons, thirty, forty, fifty years ago, are useless now ; they only serve to amuse an audience not too critical : he was ashamed of what he had himself said about the Lords ; such charges are like the oratory of an ex-Minister on the stump, finding no accusation too reckless to be hurled against his enemies.

He was profoundly ambitious. To some men, situated like himself, it might have been a legitimate and sufficient ambition to recover by slow degrees and thrift, and in some trading way, the place in the middle class from which the Coppins had fallen. Not so to Dick Coppin. He cared very little about the former

greatness of the Coppins, and the position once occupied by Coppin the builder, his father, before he went bankrupt. He meant, secretly, something very much greater for himself; he would be a member of Parliament; he would be a working man's member. There have already been half a dozen working men's members in the House; their success has not hitherto been marked, probably because none of them have shown that they know what they want, if indeed they want anything; up to the last few days, Dick simply desired in the abstract to be one of them—only of course a red-hot Radical, an Irreconcilable. Now, however, he desired more; his cousin's words and the Chartist's words fell on fruitful soil; he perceived that to become a power in the House one must be able to inform the House on the wants, the programme of his constituents; what they desire and mean to have. Dick always mentally added that clause, because it belongs to the class of speech in which he had been brought up, 'and we mean to have it.' You accompany the words with a flourish of the left hand, which is found to be more

effective than the right for such purposes. They don't really mean to have it—whatever it may be—but with their audiences it is necessary to put on the appearance of strength before there arises any confidence in strength. Dis-establishers of all kinds invariably mean to have it, and the phrase is perhaps getting played out.

Dick went home to his lodgings, and sat among his books, thinking. He was a man who read; for the sake of being independent he became a teetotaller, so that, getting good wages, he was rich: he would not marry, because he did not want to be encumbered: he bought such books as he thought would be useful to him, and read them, but no others: he was a man of energy and tenacity, whose chief fault was the entire absence, as yet, of sympathy and imagination. If these could be supplied in any way, Dick Coppin's course would be assured. For with them would come play of fancy, repartee, wit, illustration, and the graces as well as the strength of oratory.

He went on Monday evening to see Miss Kennedy. He would find out from her, as a

beginning, all that she could tell him about the wages of women.

‘But I have told you,’ she said, ‘I told you all the first night you came here. Have you forgotten? Then, I suppose I must tell you again.’

The first time he was only bored with the story, because he did not see how he could use it for his own purposes. Therefore, he had forgotten the details.

She told him the sad story of woman’s wrongs, which go unredressed while their sisters clamour for female suffrage, and make school boards intolerable by their squabbles. The women do but copy the men; therefore, while the men neglect the things that lie ready to their hand, and hope for things impossible, under new forms of Government, what wonder if the women do the like?

This time Dick listened, because he now understood that a practical use might be made out of the information. He was not a man of highly sensitive organisation, nor did he feel any indignation at the things Angela told him, seeing that he had grown up among these

things all his life, and regarded the inequalities of wages and work as part of the bad luck of being born a woman. But he took note of all, and asked shrewd questions, and made suggestions.

‘If,’ he said, ‘there’s a hundred women asking for ten places, of course the governor ’ll give them to the cheapest.’

‘That,’ replied Angela, ‘is a matter of course as things now are. But there is another way of considering the question. If we had a Woman’s Trade Union, as we shall have before long, where there are ten places, only ten women should be allowed to apply, and just wages be demanded!’

‘How is that to be done?’

‘My friend, you have yet a great deal to learn.’

Dick reddened, and replied rudely, that if he had, he did not expect to learn it from a woman.

‘A great deal to learn,’ she repeated gently; ‘above all, you have got to learn the lesson which your cousin began to teach you the other night—the great lesson of finding

out what you want, and then getting it for yourselves. Governments are nothing: you must help yourselves; you must combine.'

He was silent. The girl made him angry, yet he was afraid of her, because no other woman whom he had ever met spoke as she did, or knew so much.

'Combine,' she repeated. 'Preach the doctrine of combination; and teach us the purposes for which we ought to combine.'

The advice was just what the cobbler had given.

'Oh, Mr. Coppin'—her voice was as winning as her eyes were kind and full of interest,—'you are clever; you are persevering; you are brave; you have so splendid a voice; you have such a natural gift of oratory, that you ought to become—you must become—one of the leaders of the people.'

Pride fell prone—like Dagon—before these words. Dick succumbed to the gracious influence of a charming woman.

'Tell me,' he said, reddening, because it is humiliating to seek help of a girl, 'tell me what I am to do.'

‘You are ambitious, are you not?’

‘Yes,’ he replied boldly, ‘I am ambitious. I don’t tell them outside,’ he jerked his thumb over his shoulder to indicate the Advanced Club, ‘but I mean to get into the ’Ouse—I mean the House.’ One of his little troubles was the correction of certain peculiarities of speech common among his class. It was his cousin who first directed his attention to this point.

‘Yes; there is no reason why you should not get into the House,’ said Angela. ‘But it would be a thousand pities if you should get in yet.’

‘Why should I wait, if they will elect me?’

‘Because, Mr. Coppin, you must not try to lead the people till you know whither you would lead them; because you must not pretend to represent the people till you have learned their condition and their wants; because you must not presume to offer yourself till you are prepared with a programme.’

‘Yet plenty of others do.’

‘They do; but what else have they done?’

‘Only tell me, then—tell me what to do. Am I to read?’

‘No; you have read enough for the present. Rest your eyes from books; open them to the world; see things as they are. Look out of this window. What do you see?’

‘Nothing; a row of houses; a street; a road.’

‘I see, besides, that the houses are mean, dirty, and void of beauty: but I see more. I see an organ-player; on the kerbstone the little girls are dancing; in the road the ragged boys are playing. Look at the freedom of the girls’ limbs; look at the careless grace of the children. Do you know how clever they are? Some of them who sleep where they can, and live as they can, can pick pockets at three, go shop-lifting at four, plot and make conspiracies at five: see how they run and jump and climb.’

‘I see them. They are everywhere. How can we help that?’

‘You would leave these poor children to the Government and the police. Yet I think a better way to redeem these little ones is for

the working men to resolve together that they shall be taken care of, taught, and apprenticed. Spelling, which your cousin says constitutes most of the School Board education, does not so much matter. Take them off the streets and train them to a trade. Do you ever walk about the streets at night? Be your own police, and make your streets clean. Do you ever go into the courts and places where the dock labourers sleep? Have a committee for every one such street or court, and make them decent. When a gang of roughs make the pavement intolerable, you decent men step off and leave them to the policeman, if he dares interfere. Put down the roughs yourselves with a strong hand. Clear out the thieves' dens and the drinking-shops; make rogues and vagabonds go elsewhere. I am always about among the people: they are full of sufferings which need not be; there are a great many workers—ladies, priests, clergymen—among them, trying to remove some of the suffering. But why do you not do this for yourselves? Be your own almoners. I find everywhere,

too, courage and honesty, and a desire for better things. Show them how their lot may be alleviated.'

'But I don't know how,' he replied humbly.

'You must find out, if you would be their leader. And you must have sympathy. Never was there yet a leader of the people who did not feel with them as they feel.'

This saying was too hard for the young man, who had, he knew, felt hitherto only for himself.

'You say what Harry says. I sometimes think——' He stopped short as if an idea had suddenly occurred to him. 'Look here, is it true that you and Harry are keeping company?'

'No, we are not,' Angela replied, with a blush.

'Oh, I thought you were. Is it off, then?'

'It never was—more—on—than it is at present, Mr. Coppin.'

'Oh!' He looked doubtful. 'Well,' he said, 'I suppose there is no reason why a girl should tell a lie about such a simple thing.'

He certainly was a remarkably rude young man. 'Either you are or you ain't. That's it, isn't it? And you ain't?'

'We are not,' said Angela, with a little blush, for the facts of the case were, from one point of view, against her.

'Then, if you are not—I don't care—though it's against my rules, and I did say I would never be bothered with a woman. . . . Look here—you and me will ——'

'Will what?'

'Will keep company,' he replied firmly. 'Oh, I know: it's a great chance for you; but then, you see, you ain't like the rest of 'em, and you know things, somehow, that may be useful—though how you learned 'em, nor where you came from, nor what's your character—there—I don't care, we'll keep company!'

'Oh!'

'Yes: we'll begin next Sunday. You'll be useful to me, so that the bargain is not all on one side.' It was not till afterwards that Angela felt the full force of this remark. 'As for getting married, there's no hurry: we'll

talk about that when I'm member. Of course, it would be silly to get married now.'

'Of course,' said Angela.

'Let's get well up the tree first. Lord help you! How could I climb, to say nothing o' you, with a round half-dozen o' babies at my heels?'

'But, Mr. Coppin,' she said, putting aside these possibilities, 'I am sorry to say that I cannot possibly keep company with you. There is a reason—I cannot tell you what it is—but you must put that out of your thoughts.'

'Oh!' his face fell, 'if you won't, you won't. Most girls jump at a man who's in good wages and a temperance man, and sought after, like me. But—there—if you won't, there's an end. I'm not going to waste my time cryin' after any girl.'

'We will remain friends, Mr. Coppin?'

She held out her hand.

'Friends? what's that? we might ha' been pals—I mean partners.'

'But I can tell you all I think; I can advise you in my poor way still, whenever you please to ask my advice, even if I do not

share your greatness. And believe me, Mr. Coppin, that I most earnestly desire to see you not only in the House, but a real leader of the people, such a leader as the world has never yet beheld. To begin with, you will be a man of the very people.'

'Ay!' he said, 'one of themselves!'

'A man not to be led out of his way by flatterers.'

'No,' he said, with a superior smile, 'no one, man or woman, can flatter me.'

'A man who knows the restless unsatisfied yearnings of the people, and what they mean, and has found out how they may be satisfied.'

'Ye—yes!' he replied, doubtfully, 'certainly.'

'A man who will lead the people to get what is good for themselves and by themselves, without the help of Government.'

And no thunders in the Commons? No ringing denunciation of the Hereditary House? Nothing at all that he had looked to do and to say? Call this a leadership? But he thought of the Chartist and his new methods. By different roads, said Montaigne, we arrive at the same end.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHAT WILL BE THE END?

THE end of the year drew near, the end of that last year of 'eighty-one, which, whatever its shortcomings, its burning heat of July and its wretched rain of August, went out in sweet and gracious sunshine, and a December like unto the April of a poet. For six months Angela had been living among her girls; the place was become homelike to her; the work-women were now her friends, her trusted friends; the voice of calumny about her antecedents was silent, unless when it was the voice of Bunker; the Palace of Delight, whose meaning was as yet unknown and unsuspected, was rising rapidly, and, indeed, was nearly complete, a shell which had to be filled with things beautiful and delightful, of which Angela did not trust herself to speak. She had a great

deal to think of in those last days of the year 'eighty-one. The dressmaking was nothing; that went on: there was some local custom, and more was promised. It seemed as if, on the soundest principles of economy, it would actually pay; there was a very large acquaintance made at odd times among the small streets and mean houses of Stepney: it was necessary to visit these people and to talk with them. Angela had nothing to do with the ordinary channels of charity; she would help neither curate, nor sister of mercy, nor Bible-woman. Why, she said, do not the people stand shoulder to shoulder and help themselves? To be sure, she had the great advantage over the professional visitors that she was herself only a workwoman, and was not paid for any services. And, as if there was not already enough to make her anxious, there was that lover of hers.

Were she and Harry keeping company? Dick Coppin asked this question, and Angela, not altogether truthfully, said that they were not. What else were they doing, indeed? No word of love now; had he not promised to abstain? Yet she knew his past; she knew what

he had given up for her sake, believing her only a poor dressmaker—all for love of her—and she could not choose but let her heart go forth to so loyal and true a lover. Many ladies in many tales of chivalry have demanded strange services from their lovers, none so strange as that asked by Angela, when she ordered her lover not only to pretend to be a cabinet-maker and a joiner, but to *work at his trade and to live by it*. Partly in self-reproach, partly in admiration, she watched him going and coming to and from the Brewery, where he now earned, thanks to Lord Jocelyn's intervention, the sum of a whole shilling an hour. For there was nothing in his bearing or his talk to show that he repented his decision; he was always cheerful, always of good courage: more, he was always in attendance upon her. It was he who thought for her, invented plans to make her evenings attractive, brought raw lads—recruits in the army of Culture—from the Advanced Club and elsewhere, and set them an example of good manners, and was her prime minister, her aide-de-camp, her chief vizier.

And the end of it all? Nay; the thing

itself being so pleasant, why hasten the end? And if there was to be an end, could it not be connected with the opening of the Palace? Yes, when the Palace was ready to open its gates, then would Angela open her arms. For the moment, it was the sweet twilight of love, the half-hour before the dawn, the sweet uncertainty when all was certainty. And as yet the Palace was only just receiving its roof; the fittings and decorations, the organ and the statues and all had still to be put in. When everything was ready, then then Angela would somehow, perhaps, find words to bid her lover be happy if she could make him happy.

There could be but one end. Angela came to Whitechapel, incognita, a princess disguised as a milkmaid, partly out of curiosity, partly to try her little experiment for the good of the workgirls, with the gaiety and light heart of youth, thinking that before long she would return to her old place, *just as she had left it*. But she could not: her old views of life were changed; and a man had changed them: more than that, a man whose society,

whose strength, whose counsel, had become necessary to her. 'Who,' she asked herself, 'would have thought of the Palace, except—him? Could I—could any woman? I could have given away money; that is all: I could have been robbed and cheated: but such an idea, so grand, so simple—it is a man's, not a woman's. When the Palace is completed, when all is ready for the opening—then——' And then the air became musical with the clang and clash of wedding bells, up the scale, down the scale, in thirds, in fifths, with triple bob-majors, and the shouts of the people, and the triumphant strains of a Wedding March.

How could there be any end but one? seeing that not only did this young man present himself nearly every evening at the drawing-room, when he was recognised as the Director of Ceremonies, or the Leader of the Cotillon, or the Deviser of Sports, from an acted *Proverbe* to a Madrigal, but that, in addition, the custom was firmly established that he and Angela should spend their Sundays together; when it rained they went to church together, and had readings in the drawing-room in the

afternoon, with perhaps a little concert in the evening of sacred music, to which some of the girls would come. But if the day was sunny and bright there were many places where they might go, for the East is richer than the West in pretty and accessible country places. They would take the tram along the Mile End Road, past the delightful old church of Bow to Stratford, with its fine Town Hall and its round dozen of churches and chapels—a town of fifty thousand people, and quite a genteel place, whose residents preserve the primitive custom of fetching the dinner beer themselves, from its native public-house, on Sunday after church. At Stratford there are many ways open if you are a good walker, as Angela was. You may take the Woodford Road, and presently turn to the right and find yourself in a grand old forest—only there is not much of it left—called Hainault Forest. When you have crossed the forest you get to Chigwell, and then if you are wise you will take another six miles, as Angela and Harry generally did, and get to Epping, where the toothsome steak may be found, or haply the simple cold beef not to be despised

after a fifteen miles walk. And so home by train. Or you may take the northern road at Stratford, and walk through Leytonstone and Woodford, and leaving Epping Forest on the right, walk along the bank of the river Lea till you come to Waltham Abbey, where there is a church to be seen, and a cross, and other marvels. Or you may go still farther afield and take train all the way to Ware, and walk through country roads and pleasant lanes, if you have a map, to stately Hatfield, and on to St. Albans—but do not try to dine there, even if you are only one-and-twenty, and a girl. All these walks, and many more, were taken by Angela, with her companion, on that blessed day which should be spent for the good of body as well as soul. They are walks which are beautiful in the winter as well as in the summer: though the trees are leafless, there is an underwood faintly coloured with its winter tint of purple, and there are stretches of springy turf, and bushes hung with catkins; and, above all, there was nobody in the Forest or on the roads except Angela and Harry. Sometimes the night fell on them when they were yet three or four

miles from Epping: then, as they walked in the twilight, the trees on either hand silently glided past them like ghosts, and the mist rose and made things look shadowy and large, and the sense of an endless pilgrimage fell upon them, as if they would always go on like this, side by side; then their hearts would glow within them, and they would talk, and the girl would think it no shame to reveal the secret thoughts of her heart, although the man with her was not her accepted lover.

As for her reputation, where was it? Not gone, indeed, because no one, among her old friends, knew of these walks and this companionship; but in grievous peril.

Or, when the day was cloudy, there was the City. I declare there is no place which contains more delightful walks for a cloudy Sunday forenoon, when the clang of the bells has finished, and the scanty worshippers are in their places, and the sleepy sextons have shut the doors, than the streets and lanes of the old City. You must go, as Harry did, provided with something of ancient lore, otherwise the most beautiful places will quite certainly be

thrown away and lost for you. Take that riverside walk from Billingsgate to Blackfriars. Why, here were the quays, the ports, the whole commerce of the City in the good old days. Here was Cold Herbergh, that great, many-gabled house where Harry Prince of Wales ‘carried on’ with Falstaff and his merry crew: here was Queenhithe; here Dowgate with Walbrook; here Baynard’s Castle, and close by the tower of Montfichet; also a little to the north a thousand places dear to the antiquary, though they have pulled down so much: there is Tower Royal, where Richard the Second lodged his mother: there is the church of Whittington, close by the place where his college stood: there are the precincts of Paul’s and the famous street of Chepe—do people ever think what things have been done in Chepe? There is Austin Friars with its grand old church, now given to the Dutch, and its quiet City square, where only a few years ago lived Lettice Langton, of whom some of us may have heard; there is the Tower Hill, on which was formerly the residence of one Alderman Medlycott, guardian of Nelly Carellis: and west

of Paul's there is the place where once stood the house of Dr. Gregory Shovel, who received the orphan Kitty Pleydell. But, indeed, there is no end to the histories and associations of the City, and a man may give his life profitably to the mastery and mystery of its winding streets.

Here they would wander in the quiet Sunday forenoons, while their footsteps echoed in the deserted streets, and they could walk fearless in the middle of the road, while they talked of the great town and its million dwellers, who come like the birds in the morning and vanish like the birds in the evening.

Or they would cross the river and wander up and down the quaint old town of Rotherhithe, or visit Southwark, the town of hops and malt and all kinds of strange things, or Deptford the Deserted, or even Greenwich; and if it was rainy they would go to church. There are a great many places of worship about Whitechapel, and many forms of creed, from that of the Baptist to that of the man with the Biretta; and it would be difficult to select one which is more confident than another of possessing the real Philosopher's Stone,

the thing for which we are always searching, the Whole Truth. And everywhere, church and chapel filled with the well-to-do, and the respectable, and a sprinkling of the very poor. But of the working men—none.

‘Why have they all given up religion?’ asked Angela. ‘Why should the working men all over the world feel no need of religion, if it were only the religious emotion?’

Harry, who had answers ready for many questions, could find none for this. He asked his cousin Dick, but he could not tell. Personally, he said, he had something else to do, but if the women wanted to go to church they might, and so long as the parsons and priests did not meddle with him, he should not meddle with them. But these statements hardly seemed an answer to the question. Perhaps in Berlin or in Paris they could explain more clearly how this strange thing has come to pass.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TRUTH WITH FAITHFULNESS.

To possess pure truth—and to know it—is a thing which affects people in two ways, both of them uncomfortable to their fellow-creatures. It impels some to go pointing out the purity of truth to the world at large, insisting upon it, dragging unwilling people along the road which leads to it, and dwelling upon the dangers which attend the neglect of so great a chance. Others it affects with a calm and comfortable sense of superiority. The latter was Rebekah's state of mind: to be a Seventh Day Independent was only one degree removed from belonging to the Chosen People, to begin with: and that there is but one chapel in all England where the Truth reposes for a space, as the Ark of the Covenant reposed at Shiloh, 'in curtains,' is, if you please, a thing to be proud of! It brings with it elevation of soul.

There is at present, whatever there may once have been, no proselytising zeal about the Seventh Day Independents: they are, in fact, a torpid body: they are contented with the conviction—a very comforting one, and possessed by other creeds besides their own—that, sooner or later, the whole world will embrace their faith. Perhaps the Jews look forward to a day when, in addition to the Restoration which they profess to desire, all mankind will become proselytes in the Court of the Gentiles: it is something little short of this that the congregation of Seventh Day Independents expect in the dim future. What a splendid, what a magnificent field for glory—call it not vain-glory!—does this conviction present to the humble believer! There are, again, so very few of them, that each one may feel himself a visible pillar of the Catholic Church, bearing on his shoulders a perceptible and measurable quantity of weight. Each is an Atlas. It is, moreover, pleasing to read the Holy Scriptures, especially the books of the Prophets, as written especially for a Connection which numbers just one chapel in Great

Britain and seven in the United States. How grand is the name of Catholic applied to just one church! Catholicity is as yet all to come, and exists only as a germ, or seedling! The Early Christians may have experienced the same delight.

Rebekah, best and most careful of shop-women and accountants, showed her religious superiority more by the silence of contempt than by zeal for conversion. When Captain Tom Coppin, for instance, was preaching to the girls, she went on with her figures, casting up, ruling in red ink, carrying forward in methodical fashion, as if his words could not possibly have any concern with her : and when a church bell rang, or any words were spoken about other forms of worship, she became suddenly deaf and blind and cold. But she entreated Angela to attend their services. ‘We want *everybody* to come,’ she said : ‘we only ask for a single hearing ; come and hear my father preach.’

She believed in the faith of the Seventh Day. As for her father—when a man is paid to advocate the cause of an eccentric or a

ridiculous form of belief ; when he has to plead that cause week by week to the same slender following, to prop up the limp, and to keep together his small body of believers ; when he has to maintain a show of hopefulness, to strengthen the wavering, to confirm the strong, to encourage his sheep in confidence ; when he gets too old for anything else, and his daily bread depends upon this creed and no other,—who shall say what, after a while, that man believes or does not believe ? Red-hot words fall from his lips, but they fall equally red-hot each week ; his arguments are conclusive, but they were equally conclusive last week ; his logic is irresistible, his encouragement is warm and glowing ; but logic and encouragement alike are those of last week and many weeks ago—surely, surely there is no worse fate possible for any man than to preach, week by week, any form whatever of dogmatic belief, and to live by it ; surely nothing can be more deadly than to simulate zeal, to suppress doubt, to pretend certainty. But this is dangerous ground ; because others besides Seventh Day Independents may feel that they are upon

it, and that beneath them there are quagmires.

‘Come,’ said Rebekah. ‘We want nothing but a fair hearing.’

Their chapel was endowed, which doubtless helped the flock to keep together: it had a hundred and ten pounds a year belonging to it; and a little house for the minister, and there were scanty pew rents, which almost paid for the maintenance of the fabric and the old woman who cleaned the windows and dusted the pews. If the Reverend Percival Armitage gave up that chapel, he would have no means of subsistence at all. Let us not impute motives: no doubt he firmly believed what he taught; but his words, like his creed, were stereotyped; they had long ceased to be persuasive; they now served only to preserve.

If Angela had accepted that invitation for any given day, there would have been, she knew very well, a sermon for the occasion, conceived, written, and argued out expressly for herself. And this she did not want. Therefore she said nothing at all of her intentions, but chose one Saturday when there was little

doing, and she could spare a forenoon for her visit.

The chapel of the Seventh Day Independents stands in Redman's Lane, close to the Advanced Club House. It is a structure extremely plain and modest in design. It was built by an architect who entertained humble views—perhaps he was a Churchman—concerning the possible extension of the Connection, because the whole chapel if quite filled would not hold more than two hundred people. The front, or façade, is flat, consisting of a surface of grey brick wall, with a door in the middle and two circular windows, one on each side. Over the door there are two dates—one of erection, the other of restoration. The chapel within is a well-proportioned room, with a neat gallery running round three sides, resting on low pillars and painted a warm and cheerful drab: the pews are painted of the same colour. At the back are two windows with semicircular arches, and between the windows stands a small railed platform with a reading-desk upon it for the minister. Beside it are high seats with cushions for elders,

or other ministers if there should be any. But these seats have never been occupied in the memory of man. The pews are ranged in front of the platform, and they are of the old and high-backed kind. It is a wonderful—a truly wonderful thing that clergymen, priests, ministers, padres, rabbis, and church architects, with churchwardens, sidesmen, vergers, bishops, and chapel-keepers of all persuasions are agreed, whatever their other differences, in the unalterable conviction that it is impossible to be religious—that is, to attend services in a proper frame of mind—unless one is uncomfortable. Therefore we are offered a choice: we may sit in high-backed, narrow-seated pews, or we may sit on low-backed, narrow-seated benches; but sit in comfort we may not. The Seventh Day people have got the high-backed pew (which catches you in the shoulder-blade, and tries the backbone, and affects the brain, and causes softening in the long run), and the narrow seat (which drags the muscles and brings on premature paralysis of the lower limbs). The equally narrow, low-backed bench produces injurious

effects of a different kind, but similarly pernicious. How would it be to furnish one aisle, at least, of a church with broad, low, and comfortable chairs having arms? They should be reserved for the poor, who have so few easy chairs of their own: rightly managed and properly advertised, they might help towards a revival of religion among the working classes.

Above the reading platform in this little chapel, they have caused to be painted on the wall the Ten Commandments—the fourth emphasised in red—with a text or two, bearing on their distinctive doctrine: and in the corner is a door leading to a little vestry; but, as there are no vestments, its use is not apparent.

As for the position taken by these people, it is perfectly logical, and, in fact, impregnable. There is no answer to it. They say, ‘Here is the Fourth Commandment. All the rest you continue to observe. Why not this? When was it repealed? And by whom?’ If you put these questions to Bishop or Presbyterian, he has no reply. Because that Law never has been repealed. Yet, as the people of the Connection complain, though they have reason

and logic on their side, the outside world will not listen, and go on breaking the Commandment with light and unthinking heart. It is a dreadful responsibility—albeit a grand thing—to be in possession of so simple a truth of such vast importance, and yet to get nobody ever to listen. The case is worse even than that of Daniel Fagg.

Angela noted all these things as she entered the little chapel a short time after the service had commenced. It was bewildering to step out of the noisy streets, where the current of Saturday morning was at flood, into this quiet room with its strange service and its strange flock of Nonconformists. The thing, at first, felt like a dream: the people seemed like the ghosts of an unquiet mind.

There were very few worshippers; she counted them all: four elderly men, two elderly women, three young men, two girls, one of whom was Rebekah, and five boys. Sixteen in all. And standing on the platform was their leader.

Rebekah's father, the Rev. Percival Armitage, was a shepherd who from choice led his

flock gently, along peaceful meadows and in shady quiet places : he had no prophetic fire : he had evidently long since acquiesced in the certain fact that under him, at least, whatever it might do under others, the Connection would not greatly increase. Perhaps he did not himself desire an increase which would give him more work. Perhaps he never had much enthusiasm. By the simple accident of birth he was a Seventh Day Christian : being of a bookish and unambitious turn, and of an indolent habit of body, mentally and physically unfitted for the life of a shop, he entered the ministry : in course of time he got this chapel, where he remained, tolerably satisfied with his lot in life, a simple, self-educated, mildly pious person, equipped with the phrases of his craft, and comforted with the consciousness of superiority and separation. He looked up from his book in a gentle surprise when Angela entered the chapel : it was seldom that a stranger was seen there : once, not long ago, there was a boy who had put his head in at the door and shouted ‘Hoo!’ and run away again : once there was a drunken sailor who

thought it was a public-house, and sat down and began to sing and wouldn't go, and had to be shoved out by the united efforts of the whole small congregation—when he was gone, they sang an extra hymn to restore a religious calm : but never a young lady before. Angela took her seat amid the wondering looks of the people, and the minister went on in a perfunctory way with his prayers and his hymns and his exposition. There certainly did seem to an outsider a want of heart about the service, but that might have been due to the emptiness of the pews. When it came to the sermon, Angela thought the preacher spoke and looked as if the limit of endurance had at last almost arrived, and he would not much longer endure the inexpressible dreariness of the conventicle. It was not so : he was always mildly sad : he seemed always a little bored : it was no use pretending to be eloquent any more : fireworks were thrown away : and as for what he had to say, the congregation always had the same thing, looked for the same thing, and would have risen in revolt at the suggestion of a new thing. His sermon

was neither better nor worse than may be heard any day in church or chapel; nor was there anything in it to distinguish it from the sermons of any other body of Christians. The outsider left off listening and began to think of the congregation. In the pew with her was a man of sixty or so, with long black hair streaked with grey, brushed back behind his ears: he was devout and followed the prayers audibly, and sang the hymns out of a manuscript music-book, and read the text critically: his face was the face of a bull-dog for resolution. The man, she thought, would enjoy going to the stake for his opinions: and if the Seventh Day Independents were to be made the National Established Church, he would secede the week after and make a new sect, if only by himself. Such men are not happy under authority: their freedom of thought is as the breath of their nostrils, and they cannot think like other people. He was not well dressed, and was probably a shoemaker or some such craftsman. In front of her sat a family of three: the wife was attired in a sealskin rich and valuable, and the son, a

young man of one- or two-and-twenty, had the dress and appearance of a gentleman—that is to say, of what passes for such in common City parlance. What did these people do in such a place? Yet they were evidently of the religion. Then she noticed a widow and her boy: the widow was not young; probably, Angela thought, she had married late in life: her lips were thin and her face was stern. ‘The boy,’ thought Angela, ‘will have the doctrine administered with faithfulness.’ Only sixteen altogether: yet all, except the pastor, seemed to be grimly in earnest and inordinately proud of their sect. It was as if the emptiness of their benches and their forsaken condition called upon them to put on a greater show of zeal, and to persuade themselves that the Cause was worth fighting for. The preacher alone seemed to have lost heart. But his people, who were accustomed to him, did not notice this despondency.

Then Angela, while the sermon went slowly on, began to speculate on the conditions of belonging to such a sect. First of all, with the apparent exception of the lady in sealskin and

her husband and son, the whole sixteen—perhaps another two or three were prevented from attending—were of quite the lower middle class; they belonged to the great stratum of society whose ignorance is as profound as their arguments are loud. But the uncomfortable-ness of it! They can do no work on the Saturday—‘neither their manservant nor their maidservant,’—their shops are closed and their tools put aside. They lose a sixth part of the working time. The followers of this creed are as much separated from their fellows as the Jews. On the Sunday they may work if they please, but on that day all the world is at church or at play. Angela looked round again. Yes; the whole sixteen had upon their faces the look of pride; they were proud of being separated; it was a distinction, just as it is to be a Samaritan. Who would not be one of the recipients, however few they be in number, of Truth? And what a grand thing, what an inspiring thing it is to feel that some day or other, perhaps not to-day nor to-morrow, nor in one’s lifetime at all, the whole world will rally round the poor little obscure banner, and shout alto-

gether, with voice of thunder, the battle-cry which now sounds no louder than a puny whistle-pipe ! Yet, on the whole, Angela felt it must be an uncomfortable creed ; better to be one of the undistinguished crowd which flocks to the parish church and yearns not for any distinctions at all. Then the sermon ended and they sang another hymn—the collection in use was a volume printed in New York and compiled by the Committee of the Connection, so that there were, manifestly, congregations on the other side of the Atlantic living in the same discomfort of separation.

At the departure of the people Rebekah hurried out first and waited in the doorway to greet Angela.

‘I knew you would come some day,’ she said, ‘but oh ! I wish you had told me when you were coming, so that father might have given one of his doctrine sermons. What we had to-day was only one of the comfortable discourses to the professed members of the church which we all love so much. I am so sorry. Oh ! he would convince you in ten minutes.’

‘But, Rebekah,’ said Angela, ‘I should be sorry to have seen your service otherwise than is usual. Tell me, does the congregation of to-day represent all your strength?’

Rebekah coloured. She could not deny that they were, numerically, a feeble folk.

‘We rely,’ she said, ‘on the strength of our cause; and some day—oh! some day—the world will rally round us. See, Miss Kennedy, here is father; when he has said good-bye to the people’—he was talking to the lady in sealskin—‘he will come and speak to us.’

‘I suppose,’ said Angela, ‘that this lady is a member of your chapel?’

‘Yes,’ Rebekah whispered; ‘oh! they are quite rich people—the only rich people we have. They live at Leytonstone; they made their money in the bookbinding, and are consistent Christians.—Father’—for at this point Mr. Armitage left his rich followers in the porch,—‘this is Miss Kennedy of whom you have heard so much.’

Mr. Armitage took her hand with a weary smile, and asked Rebekah if Miss Kennedy would come home with her.

They lived in a small house next door to the chapel. It was so small that there was but one sitting-room, and this was filled with books.

‘Father likes to sit here,’ said Rebekah, ‘by himself all day. He is quite happy if he is let alone. Sometimes, however, he has to go to Leytonstone.’

‘To the rich people?’

‘Yes.’ Rebekah looked troubled. ‘A minister must visit his flock, you know; and if they were to leave us it would be bad for us, because the endowment is only a hundred and ten pounds a year, and out of that the church and the house have got to be kept in repair. However, a clergyman [must not be dictated to, and I tell father he should go his own way and preach his own sermons. Whatever people say, Truth must not be hidden away as if we were ashamed of it. Hush! here he is.’

The good man welcomed Angela, and said some simple words of gratitude about her reception of his daughter. He had a good face, but he wore an anxious expression, as if

something was always on his mind. And he sighed when he sat down at his table.

Angela stayed for half an hour, but the minister said nothing more to her, only when she rose to go he murmured with another heavy sigh, 'There's an afternoon service at three.'

It is quite impossible to say whether he intended this announcement as an invitation to Angela, or whether it was a complaint, wrung from a heavy heart, of a trouble almost intolerable.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

I AM THE DRESSMAKER.

It happened on this very same Saturday that Lord Jocelyn, feeling a little low, and craving for speech with his ward, resolved that he would pay a personal visit to him in his own den, where, no doubt, he would find him girt with a fair white apron and crowned with brown paper, proudly standing among a lot of his brother workmen—glorious fellows!—and up to his knees in shavings.

It is easy to take a cab and tell the driver to go to the Mile End Road ; had Lord Jocelyn taken more prudent counsel with himself, he would have bidden him drive straight to Messenger's Brewery ; but he got down where the Whitechapel Road ends and the Mile End Road begins, thinking that he would find his way to the Brewery with the greatest ease.

First, however, he asked the way of a lady with a basket on her arm ; it was, in fact, Mrs. Bormalack going a-marketing, and anxious about the price of greens ; and he received a reply so minute, exact, and bewildering, that he felt, as he plunged into the labyrinthine streets of Stepney, like one who dives into the dark and devious ways of the catacombs.

First of all, of course, he lost himself ; but as the place was strange to him, and a strange place is always curious, he walked along in great contentment. Nothing remarkable in the streets and houses, unless, perhaps, the entire absence of anything to denote inequality of wealth and position ; so that, he thought with satisfaction, the happy residents in Stepney all receive the same salaries and make the same income, contribute the same amount to the tax collectors, and pay the same rent. A beautiful continuity of sameness ; a divine monotony realising partially the dreams of the socialist. Presently he came upon a great building which seemed rapidly approaching completion ; not a beautiful building, but solid, big, well proportioned, and constructed of real red brick, and

without the 'Queen Anne' conceits which mostly go with that material. It was so large and so well built that it was evidently intended for some special purpose ; a purpose of magnitude and responsibility, requiring capital : not a factory, because the windows were large and evidently belonged to great halls, and there were none of the little windows in rows which factories must have in the nature of things : not a prison, because prisons are parsimonious to a fault in the matter of external windows ; nor a school—yet it might be a school ; then—how should so great a school be built in Stepney ? It might be a superior almshouse, or a union—yet this could hardly be. While Lord Jocelyn looked at the building, a working man lounged along, presumably an out-of-working man, with his hands in his pockets and kicking stray stones in the road, which is a sign of the penniless pocket, because he who yet can boast the splendid shilling does not slouch as he goes, or kick stones in the road, but holds his head erect and anticipates with pleasure six half-pints in the immediate future. Lord Jocelyn asked that industrious idle, or

idle industrious, if he knew the object of the building. The man replied that he did not know the object of the building; and to make it quite manifest that he really did not know, he put an adjective before the word 'object,' and another—that is, the same—before the word 'building.' With that he passed upon his way, and Lord Jocelyn was left marvelling at the slender resources of our language which makes one adjective do duty for so many qualifications. Presently he came suddenly upon Stepney Church, which is a landmark or initial point, like the man on the chair in the maze of Hampton Court. Here he again asked his way, and then, after finding it and losing it again about six times more, and being generally treated with contumely for not knowing so simple a thing, he found himself actually at the gates of the Brewery, which he might have reached in five minutes had he gone the shortest way.

'So,' he said, 'this is the property of that remarkably beautiful girl, Miss Messenger; who could wish to start better? She is young; she is charming; she is queenly; she is fabu-

lously rich ; she is clever ; she is—ah ! if only Harry had met her before he became an ass !’

He passed the gate and entered the courtyard, at one side of which he saw a door on which was painted the word ‘Office.’ The Brewery was conservative ; what was now a hive of clerks and writers was known by the same name and stood upon the same spot as the little room built by itself in the open court in which King Messenger I., the inventor of the Entire, had transacted by himself, having no clerks at all, the whole business of the infant Brewery for his great invention. Lord Jocelyn pushed open the door and stood irresolute : looking about him, a clerk advanced and asked his business. Lord Jocelyn was the most polite and considerate of men : he took off his hat humbly, bowed, and presented his card.

‘I am most sorry to give trouble,’ he said ;
‘I came to see——’

‘Certainly, my lord.’ The clerk, having been introduced to Lord Davenant, was no longer afraid of tackling a title, however grand, and would have been pleased to show his familiarity with the Great even to a Royal

Highness. ‘Certainly, my lord; if your lordship will be so good as to write your lordship’s name in the visitors’ book, a guide shall take your lordship round the Brewery immediately.’

‘Thank you, I do not wish to see the Brewery,’ said the visitor. ‘I came to see a—a young man who, I believe, works in this establishment: his name is Goslett.’

‘Oh!’ replied the clerk, taken aback. ‘Goslett! can any one,’ he asked generally of the room which he had just left, ‘tell me whether there’s a man working here named Goslett?’

Josephus—for it was the juniors’ room—knew and indicated the place and the man.

‘If, my lord,’ said the clerk, loth to separate himself from nobility, ‘your lordship will be good enough to follow me, I can take your lordship to the man your lordship wants. Quite a common man, my lord—quite. A joiner and carpenter. But if your lordship wants to see him——.’

He led Lord Jocelyn across the court, and left him at the door of Harry’s workshop.

It was not a great room with benches, and piles of shavings, and a number of men. Not at all: there were racks with tools, a bench, and a lathe: there were pieces of furniture about waiting repair, there was an unfinished cabinet with delicate carved work, which Lord Jocelyn recognised at once as the handiwork of his boy; and the boy himself stood in the room, his coat off and his cuffs turned up, contemplating the cabinet. It is one of the privileges of the trade, that it allows—nay, requires—a good deal of contemplation. Presently Harry turned his head and saw his guardian standing in the doorway. He greeted him cheerfully and led him into the room, where he found a chair with four legs, and begged him to sit down and talk.

‘ You like it, Harry ? ’

Harry laughed. ‘ Why not ? ’ he said. ‘ You see, I am independent, practically. They pay me pretty well according to the work that comes in. Plain work, you see—joiner’s work.’

‘ Yes, yes, I see. But how long, my boy—how long ? ’

‘ Well, sir, I cannot say. Why not all my life ? ’

Lord Jocelyn groaned.

‘I admit,’ said Harry, ‘that if things were different I should have gone back to you long ago. But now I cannot, unless——’

‘Unless what?’

‘Unless the girl who keeps me here goes away herself or bids me go.’

‘Then, you are really engaged to the dress—I mean, the young lady?’

‘No, I am not. Nor has she shown the least sign of accepting me. Yet I am her devoted and humble servant.’

‘Is she a witch—this woman? Good heavens, Harry! Can you, who have associated with the most beautiful and best-bred women in the world, be so infatuated about a dressmaker?’

‘It is strange, is it not? But it is true. The thought of her fills my mind day and night. I see her constantly. There is never one word of love, but she knows already, without that word.’

‘Strange indeed!’ repeated Lord Jocelyn, ‘but it will pass. You will awake, and find yourself again in your right mind, Harry.’

He shook his head.

‘From this madness,’ he said, ‘I shall never recover. For it is my life, whatever happens. I am her servant.’

‘It is incomprehensible,’ replied his guardian. ‘You were always chivalrous in your ideas of women. They are unusual in young men of the present day, but they used to sit well upon you. Then, however, your ideal was a lady.’

‘It is a lady still,’ said the lover, ‘and yet a dressmaker. How this can be I do not know ; but it is. In the old days men became the servants of ladies. I know, now, what a good custom it was, and how salutary to the men. Petit Jehan de Saintr  in his early days had the best of all possible training.’

‘But if Petit Jehan had lived at Stepney——’

‘Then there is another thing. The life here is useful.’

‘You now tinker chairs and get paid a shilling an hour. Formerly you made dainty carved workboxes, and fans, and pretty things for ladies, and got paid by their thanks. Which is the more useful life?’

‘It is not the work I am thinking of. It is the . . . do you remember what I said the last time I saw you?’

‘Perfectly. About your fellow-creatures, was it not? My dear Harry, it seems to me as if our fellow-men get on very well in their own way, without our interference.’

‘Yes: that is to say—no: they are all getting on as badly as possible. And somehow I want, before I go away, to find out what it is they want—they don’t know—and how they should set about getting it if it is to be got, as I think it is. You will not think me a prig, sir?’

‘You will never be a prig, Harry, under any circumstances. Does, then, the lady of your worship approve of this—this study of humanity?’

‘Perfectly. If this lady did not approve of it, I should not be engaged upon it.’

‘Harry, will you take me to see this goddess of Stepney Green? It is there, I believe, that she resides?’

‘Yes, I would rather not—yet.’ The young man hesitated for a moment. ‘Miss Kennedy thinks I have always been a working man. I

would not undeceive her yet. I would rather she did not know that I have given up—for her sake—such a man as you, and such companionship as yours.’

He held out both his hands to his guardian, and his eyes for a moment were dim. Lord Jocelyn made no reply for a moment. Then he cleared his throat and said he must go, and asked Harry rather piteously if he could do nothing for him at all, and made slowly for the door. The clerk who had received the distinguished visitor was standing at the door of the office waiting for another glimpse of the noble and illustrious personage. Presently he came back and reported that his lordship had crossed the yard on the arm of the young man called Goslett, and that on parting with him he had shaken him by the hand and called him ‘my boy.’ Whereat many marvelled, and the thing was a stumblingblock, but Josephus said it was not at all unusual for members of his family to be singled out by the Great for high positions of trust, that his own father had been churchwarden of Stepney, and he was a far-off cousin of Miss Messenger’s, and that he could himself

have been by this time superintendent of his Sunday school if it had not been for his misfortunes. Presently the thing was told to the Chief Accountant, who told it to the Chief Brewer; and if there had been a Chief Baker, one knows not what would have happened.

Lord Jocelyn walked slowly away in the direction of Stepney Green. She lived there, did she? Oh! and her name was Miss Kennedy. Ah! and a man by calling upon her might see her. Very good. He would call. He would say that he was the guardian of Harry, and that he took a warm interest in him, and that the boy was pining away (which was not true), and that he called to know if Miss Kennedy, as a friend, could divine the cause (which was crafty). Quite a little domestic drama he made up in his own mind, which would have done beautifully had it not been completely shattered by the surprising things which happened, as will immediately be seen.

Presently he arrived at Stepney Green, and stopped to look about him. A quiet, George-the-Third-looking place, with many good and solid houses, and a narrow strip of garden

running down the middle. In which of these houses did Miss Kennedy dwell?

There came along the asphaltic walk an old, old man; he was feeble, and tottered as he went; he wore a black silk stock and a buttoned-up frock coat; his face was wrinkled and creased. It was, in fact, Mr. Maliphant going rather late, because he had fallen asleep by the fire, to protect the property. Lord Jocelyn asked him politely if he would tell him where Miss Kennedy lived.

The patriarch looked up, laughed joyously, and shook his head. Then he said something, inaudibly, but his lips moved. And then, pointing to a large house on the right, he said aloud,—

‘Caroline Coppin’s house it was. She that married Sergeant Goslett. Mr. Messenger, whose grandmother was a Coppin and a good old Whitechapel family, had the deeds. My memory is not so good as usual this morning, young man, or I could tell you who had the house before Caroline’s father. But I think it was old Mr. Messenger, because the young man who died the other day, and was only a year or two

older than I, was born here himself.' Then he went on his way laughing and wagging his head.

'That is a wonderful old man,' said Lord Jocelyn. 'Caroline Coppin's house: that is Harry's mother's house. Pity she couldn't keep it for her son. The Sergeant was a thrifty man, too. Here is another native. Let us try him.'

This time it was Daniel Fagg, and in one of his despondent moods, because none of the promised proofs had arrived.

'Can you tell me, sir,' asked Lord Jocelyn, 'where Miss Kennedy lives?'

The 'native,' who had sandy hair and a grey beard and immense sandy eyebrows, turned upon him fiercely, shaking a long finger in his face as if it was a sword.

'Mind you,' he growled, 'Miss Kennedy's the only man among you. Talk of your scholars! Gar! Jealousy and envy! But I've remembered her. Posterity shall know her when the head of the Egyptian department is dead and forgotten.'

'Thank you,' said Lord Jocelyn as the man

left him. 'I am likely to be forwarded at this rate.'

He tried again.

This time it happened to be none other than Mr. Bunker. The events of the last few weeks were preying upon his mind. He thought continually of handcuffs and prisons; he was nervous and agitated.

But he replied courteously and pointed out the house.

'Ah!' said Lord Jocelyn, 'that is the house which an old man whom I have just asked said was Caroline Coppin's.'

'Old man? What old man?' Mr. Bunker turned pale. It seemed as if the atmosphere itself was full of dangers. 'Ouse was whose? That 'ouse, sir, is mine—mine, do you hear?'

Lord Jocelyn described the old man. In fact, he was yet within sight.

'I know him,' said Mr. Bunker. 'He's mad, that old man—silly with age. Nobody minds him. That 'ouse, sir, is mine.'

'Oh! and you'—for Lord Jocelyn now recollected him—'are Mr. Bunker, are you? Do you not remember me? Think, man.'

Mr. Bunker thought his hardest ; but if you do not remember a man, you might as well stand on your head as begin to think.

‘Twenty years ago,’ said Lord Jocelyn, ‘I took away your nephew, who has now come back here.’

‘You did—you did,’ cried Bunker, eagerly. ‘Ah! sir, why did you let him come back here? A bad business, a bad business!’

‘I came to see him to-day, perhaps to ask him why he stays here.’

‘Take him away again, sir. Don’t let him stay. Rocks ahead, sir!’ Mr. Bunker put up his hands in warning. ‘When I see youth going to capsize on virtue, it makes my blood, as a Christian man, to curdle. Take him away.’

‘Certainly. It does you great credit, Mr. Bunker, as a Christian man, because curdled blood must be unpleasant. But—what rocks?’

‘A rock. One rock, a woman. In that ’ouse, sir, she lives. Her name is Miss Kennedy. That is what she calls herself. She’s a dress-maker by trade, she says, and a captivator of foolish young men by nature. Don’t go anigh

her. She may captivate you. Daniel Fagg made her an offer of marriage, and he's sixty. He confessed it to me. She tried it on with me, but a man of principles is proof. The conjurer wanted to marry her. My nephew, Dick Coppin, is a fool about her.'

'She must be a very remarkable woman,' said Lord Jocelyn.

'As for that boy, Harry Goslett'—Bunker uttered the name with an obvious effort,—'he's farther gone than all the rest put together. If it wasn't for her, he would go back to where he came from.'

'Ah! and where is that?'

'Don't you know, then? You, the man who took him away? Don't you know where he came from? Was it something very bad?'

There was a look of eager malignity about the man's face; he wanted to hear something bad about his nephew.

Lord Jocelyn encouraged him.

'Perhaps I know, perhaps I do not.'

'A disgraceful story, no doubt,' said Bunker, with a pleased smile. 'I dreaded the worst when I saw him with his white hands and his

sneerin' fleerin' ways. I thought of Newgate and gaol-birds ; I did indeed, at once. Oh, prophetic soul ! Well, now we know the worst ; and you had better take him away before all the world knows it. I shan't talk, of course.'

'Thank you, Mr. Bunker. And about this Miss Kennedy—is there anything against her, except that the men fall in love with her ?'

'There is plenty against her that would astonish you. But I'm not the man to take away a woman's character. If all secrets were known we should find what a viper we've been cherishing. At the end of her year out she goes of my 'ouse. Bag and baggage, she goes. And wherever she goes that boy 'll go after her, unless you prevent it.'

'Thank you again, Mr. Bunker. Good morning.'

Angela, just returned from her chapel, was sitting at the window of the workroom in her usual place. She looked out upon the green now and again. Presently she saw Mr. Maliphant creep slowly along the pavement, and

observed that he stopped and spoke to a gentleman: then she saw Daniel Fagg swinging his arms and gesticulating as he rehearsed to himself the story of his wrongs, and he stopped and spoke to the same man; then she saw Mr. Bunker walking moodily on his way: and he stopped too, and conversed with the stranger. Then he turned, and she saw his face. It was Lord Jocelyn Le Breton, and he was walking with intention towards her own door.

She divined the truth in a moment. He was coming to see 'the dressmaker' who had bewitched his boy.

She whispered to Nelly that a gentleman was coming to see her who must be shown upstairs; she took refuge in the drawing-room, which was happily empty, and she awaited him with a beating heart.

She heard his footsteps on the stairs. The door opened. She rose to meet him.

'You here, Miss Messenger? This is indeed a surprise.'

'No, Lord Jocelyn,' she replied, confused, yet trying to speak confidently. 'In this house,

if you please, I am not Miss Messenger ; I am Miss Kennedy, the—the——’ Now she remembered exactly what her next words would mean to him, and she blushed violently. ‘I am—the—the dressmaker.’

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THRICE HAPPY BOY.

A MAN of the world at forty-five seldom feels surprised at anything, unless indeed, like Molière, he encounters virtue in unexpected quarters. This, however, was a thing so extraordinary that Lord Jocelyn gasped.

‘Pardon me, Miss Messenger,’ he said, recovering himself, ‘I was so totally unprepared for this—this discovery.’

‘Now that you have made it, Lord Jocelyn, may I ask you most earnestly to reveal it to no one? I mean, *no one at all*.’

‘I understand perfectly. Yes, Miss Messenger, I will keep your secret, since it is a secret. I will tell it to *none*. But I would ask a favour in return, if I may.’

‘What is that?’

‘Take me further into your confidence.

Let me know why you have done this most wonderful thing. I hope I am not impertinent in asking this of you.'

'Not impertinent, certainly. And the thing must seem strange to you. And after what you told me some time ago about—' she hesitated a moment, and then turned her clear brown eyes straight upon his face—'about your ward, perhaps some explanation is due to you.'

'Thank you beforehand.'

'First, however, call me Miss Kennedy here ; pray—pray do not forget that there is no Miss Messenger nearer than Portman Square.'

'I will try to remember.'

'I came here,' she went on, 'last July, having a certain purpose and a certain problem in my mind. I have remained here ever since, working at that problem. It is not nearly worked out yet, nor do I think that in the longest life it could be worked out. It is a most wonderful problem. For one thing leads to another, and great schemes rise out of small, and there are hundreds of plans springing out of one—if I could only carry them out.'

'To assist you in carrying them out, you

have secured the services of my ward, I learn.'

'Yes; he has been very good to me.'

'I have never,' said Lord Jocelyn, 'been greatly tempted in the direction of philanthropy. But pray go on.'

'The first thing I came to establish was an association of dressmakers, myself being one. That is very simple. I have started them with a house free of rent, and the necessary furniture—which I know is wrong, because it introduces an unfair advantage—and we divide all the money in certain proportions. That is one thing.'

'But, my dear young lady, could you not have done this from Portman Square?'

'I could, but not so well. To live here as a workwoman among other workwomen is, at least, to avoid the danger of being flattered, deceived, and paid court to. I was a most insignificant person when I came. I am now so far advanced that a great many employers of women's labour cordially detest me, and would like to see my association ruined.'

'Oh, Lord Jocelyn!' she went on, after a

pause, 'you do not know, you cannot know, the dreadful dangers which a rich woman has to encounter. If I had come here in my own name, I should have been besieged by every plausible rogue who could catch my ear for half an hour. I should have had all the clergy round me imploring help for their schools and their churches; I should have had every unmarried curate making love to me; I should have paid ten times as much as anybody else; and, worse than all, I should not have made a single friend. My sympathies, whenever I read the parable, are always with Dives, because he must have been so flattered and worshipped before his pride became intolerable.'

'I see. All this you escaped by your assumption of the false name.'

'Yes. I am one of themselves, one of the people; I have got my girls together: I have made them understand my project: they have become my fast and faithful friends: the better to inspire confidence, I even sheltered myself behind myself: I said Miss Messenger was interested in our success: she sends us orders: I went to the West End with things made up for

her. Thanks, mainly to her, we are flourishing : we work for shorter hours and for greater pay than other girls : I could already double my staff if I could only, which I shall soon, double the work. We have recreation, too, and we dine together, and in the evening we have singing and dancing. My girls have never before known any happiness ; now they have learned the happiness of quiet, at least, with a little of the culture, and some of the things which make rich people happy. Oh ! would you have me go away and leave them, when I have taught them things of which they never dreamed before ? Should I send them back to the squalid house and the bare pittance again ? Stay and take your luncheon with us when we dine, and ask yourself whether it would not be better for me to live here altogether—never to go back to the West End at all—than to go away and desert my girls ? ’

She was agitated because she spoke from her heart. She went on without waiting for any reply :—

‘ If you knew the joyless lives, the hopeless days of these girls, if you could see their work-

rooms, if you knew what is meant by their long hours and their insufficient food, you would not wonder at my staying here; you would cry shame upon the rich woman so selfish as to spend her substance in idle follies when she might have spent it upon her unfortunate sisters.'

'I think,' said Lord Jocelyn, 'that you are a very noble girl.'

'Then there is another scheme of mine; a project so great and generous—nay, I am not singing my own praises, believe me—that I can never get it out of my mind. This project, Lord Jocelyn, is due to your ward.'

'Harry was always an ingenious youth. But pray tell me what it is.'

'I cannot,' she replied; 'when I put the project into words, they seem cold and feeble. They do not express the greatness of it. They would not rouse your enthusiasm. I could not make you understand in any degree the great hopes I have of this enterprise.'

'And it is Harry's invention?'

'Yes—his. All I have done has been to find the money to carry it out.'

‘That is a good part of any enterprise, however.’

At this point a bell rang.

‘That is the first bell,’ said Angela. ‘Now they lay down their work and scamper about—at least the younger ones do—for ten minutes before dinner. Come with me to the dining-room.’

Presently the girls came trooping in, fifteen or so, with bright eyes and healthy cheeks. Some of them were pretty; one, Lord Jocelyn thought, of a peculiarly graceful and delicate type, though too fragile in appearance: this was Nelly Sorensen. She looked more fragile than usual to-day, and there were black lines under her lustrous eyes. Another, whom Miss Kennedy called Rebekah, was good-looking in a different way, being sturdy, rosy-cheeked, and downright in her manner. Another, who would otherwise have been quite common in appearance, was made beautiful—almost—by the patient look which had followed years of suffering; she was a cripple: all their faces during the last few months had changed for the better:

not one among them all bore the expression which is described by the significant words 'bold' and 'common.' Six months of daily drill and practice in good manners had abolished that look at any rate.

The dinner was perfectly plain and simple, consisting of a piece of meat with plenty of vegetables and bread, and nothing else at all. But the meat was good and well cooked, and the service was on fair white linen. Moreover, Lord Jocelyn, sitting down in this strange company, observed that the girls behaved with great propriety. Soon after they began, the door opened and a man came in. It was one of those to whom Lord Jocelyn had spoken on the green, the man with the bushy sandy eyebrows. He took a seat at the table and began to eat his food ravenously. Once he pushed his plate away as if in a temper, and looked up as if he was going to complain. Then the girl they called Rebekah—she came to dinner on Saturdays, so as to have the same advantages as the rest, though she did no work on that day—held up a forefinger and shook it at him, and he

relapsed into silence. He was the only one who behaved badly, and Miss Kennedy made as if she had not seen.

During the dinner the girls talked freely among themselves without any of the giggling and whispering which in some circles is considered good manners; they all treated Miss Kennedy with great respect, though she was only one workwoman among the rest. Yet there was a great difference, and the girls knew it; next to her on her left sat the pretty girl whom she called Nelly.

When dinner was over, because it was Saturday there was no more work. Some of the girls went into the drawing-room to rest for an hour and read: Rebekah went home again to attend the afternoon service: some went into the garden, although it was December, and began to play lawn tennis on the asphalte; the man with the eyebrows got up and glared moodily around from under those shaggy eyebrows, and then vanished. Angela and Lord Jocelyn remained alone.

‘You have seen us,’ she said; ‘what do you think of us?’

‘I have nothing to say. And I do not know what to think.’

‘Your ward is our right hand. We women want a man to work for us always. It is his business, and his pleasure too, to help us amuse ourselves. He finds diversions ; he invents all kinds of things for us. Just now he is arranging tableaux and plays for Christmas.’

‘Is it—is it—oh ! Miss—Kennedy—is it for the girls only ?’

‘That is dangerous ground,’ she replied, but not severely. ‘Do you think we had better discuss the subject from that point of view ?’

‘Poor boy !’ said Lord Jocelyn. ‘It is the point of view from which I must regard it.’

She blushed again, and her beautiful eyes grew limpid.

‘Do you think,’ she said, speaking low—‘do you think I do not feel for him ? Yet there is a cause—a sentiment perhaps. The time is not quite come. Lord Jocelyn, be patient with me !’

‘You will take pity on him ?’

‘Oh !’—she took the hand he offered her. ‘If I can make him happy——’

‘If not,’ replied Lord Jocelyn, kissing her hand, ‘he would be the most ungrateful dog in all the world. If not, he deserves to get nothing but a shilling an hour for the miserable balance of his days. A shilling? No: let him go back to his tenpence. My dear young lady, you have made me, at all events, the happiest of men! No, do not fear: neither by word nor look shall Harry—shall any one—know what you have been so very, very good, so generous, and so thoughtful as to tell me.’

‘He loves me for myself,’ she murmured. ‘He does not know that I am rich. Think of that, and think of the terrible suspicions which grow up in every rich woman’s heart when a man makes love to her. Now I can never, never doubt his honesty. For my sake he has given up so much: for my sake—mine—oh! why are men so good to women?’

‘No,’ said Lord Jocelyn. ‘Ask what men can ever do that they should be rewarded with the love and trust of such a woman as you!’

That is indeed a difficult question, seeing in what words the virtuous woman has been described by one who writes as if he ought to

have known. As a pendant to the picture 'tis pity, 'tis great pity, that we have not the Eulogy of the Virtuous Man. But there never were any, perhaps.

Lord Jocelyn stayed with Angela all the afternoon. They talked of many things: of Harry's boyhood; of his gentle and ready ways; of his many good qualities; and of Angela herself, her hopes and ambitions; and of their life at Bormalack's. And Angela told Lord Jocelyn about her *protégés*, the claimants to the Davenant peerage, with the history of the 'Roag in Grain,' Saturday Davenant; and Lord Jocelyn promised to call upon them.

It was five o'clock when she sent him away, with permission to come again. Now this, Lord Jocelyn felt, as he came away, was the most satisfactory, nay, the most delightful day that he had ever spent.

That lucky rascal, Harry! To think of this tremendous stroke of fortune! To fall in love with the richest heiress in England: to have that passion returned: to be about to marry the most charming, the most beautiful, the sweetest woman that had ever been made!

Happy, thrice happy boy ! What wonder, now, that he found tinkering chairs, in company, so to speak, with that incomparable woman, better than the soft divans of his club or the dinners and dances of society ? What had he, Lord Jocelyn, to offer the lad, in comparison with the delights of this strange and charming courtship ?

CHAPTER XL.

SWEET NELLY.

IN every love story there is always, though it is not always told, a secondary plot, the history of the man or woman who might have been left happy but for the wedding bells which peal for somebody else and end the tale. When these ring out, the hopes and dreams of some one else, for whom they do not ring, turn at last to dust and ashes. We are drawing near the church, we shall soon hear those bells. Let us spare a moment to speak of this tale untold, this dream of the morning doomed to disappointment.

It is only the dream of a foolish girl: she was young and ignorant: she was brought up in a school of hardship until the time when a gracious lady came to rescue her. She had experienced, outside the haven of rest where her father was safely sheltered, only the buffets

of a hard and cruel world, filled with greedy taskmasters who exacted the uttermost farthing in work, and paid the humblest farthing for reward. More than this, she knew, and her father knew, that when his time came for exchanging that haven for the cemetery, she would have to fight the hard battle alone, being almost a friendless girl, too shrinking and timid to stand up for herself. Therefore, after her rescue, at first she was in the Seventh Heaven ; nor did her gratitude and love towards her rescuer ever know any abatement. But there came a time when gratitude was called upon to contend with another feeling.

From the very first Harry's carriage towards Nelly was marked by sympathetic interest and brotherly affection. He really regarded this pretty creature, with her soft and winning ways, as a girl whom he could call by her Christian name, and treat as one treats a sweet and charming child. She was clever at learning—nobody, not even Miss Kennedy, danced better : she was docile : she was sweet-tempered, and slow to say or think evil. She possessed naturally, Harry thought—but then he forgot

that her father had commanded an East India-man—a refinement of thought and manner far above the other girls ; she caught readily the tone of her patron ; she became in a few weeks, this young dressmaker, the faithful *effigies* of a lady under the instruction of Miss Kennedy, whom she watched and studied day by day. It was unfortunate that Harry continued to treat her as a child, because she was already a woman.

Presently she began to think of him, to watch for him, to note his manner towards herself.

Then she began to compare and to watch his manner towards Miss Kennedy.

Then she began to wonder if he was paying attention to Miss Kennedy, if they were engaged, if they had an understanding.

She could find none. Miss Kennedy was always friendly towards him, but never more. He was always at her call, her faithful servant, like the rest of them, but no more.

Remember that the respect and worship with which she regarded Miss Kennedy were unbounded. But Harry she did not regard as

on the same level. No one was good enough for Miss Kennedy. And Harry, clever and bright and good as he seemed, was not too good for herself.

They were a great deal together. All Nelly's evenings were spent in the drawing-room; Harry was there every night; they read together; they talked and danced and sang together. And though the young man said no single word of love, he was always thoughtful for her, in ways that she had never experienced before. Below a certain level men are not thoughtful for women. The cheapeners of women's labour at the East End are not by any means thoughtful towards them. No one had ever considered Nelly at all, except her father.

Need one say more? Need one explain how tender flowers of hope sprang up in this girl's heart and became her secret joy?

This made her watchful, even jealous. And when a change came in Miss Kennedy's manner—it was after her first talk with Lord Jocelyn—when Nelly saw her colour heighten and her eyes grow brighter when Harry appeared, a

dreadful pain seized upon her, and she knew, without a word being spoken, that all was over for her. For what was she compared with this glorious woman, beautiful as the day, sweet as a rose in June, full of accomplishments? How could any man regard her beside Miss Kennedy? How could any man think of any other woman when such a goddess had smiled upon him?

In some stories, a girl who has to beat down and crush the young blossoms of love, goes through a great variety of performances, always in the same order. The despair of love demands that this order shall be followed. She therefore turns white; she throws herself on her bed, and weeps by herself, and miserably owns that she loves him; she tells the transparent fib to her sister or mother; she has received a blow from which she will never recover; if she is religious it brings her nearer Heaven;—all this we have read over and over again. Poor little Nelly knew nothing about her grander sisters in misfortune; she knew nothing of what is due to self-respect under similar circumstances; she only perceived that she had been foolish, and tried to show as if that was not so. It was a

make-believe of rather a sorry kind. When she was alone she reproached herself; when she was with Miss Kennedy she reproached herself; when she was with Harry she reproached herself. Always herself to blame, no one else, and the immediate result was that her great limpid eyes were surrounded by dark rings, and her cheeks grew thin.

Perhaps there is no misfortune more common among women, especially among women of the better class, than that of disappointed hope. Girls who are hard worked in shops have no time, as a rule, to think of love at all; love, like other gracious influences, does not come in their way. It is when leisure is arrived at with sufficiency of food and comfort of shelter and good clothing, that love begins. To most of Angela's girls, Harry Goslett was a creature far above their hopes or thoughts: it was pleasant to dance with him, to hear him play, to hear him talk, but he did not belong to them; it was not for nothing that their brothers called him Gentleman Jack; they were, in fact, 'common' girls, although Angela by the quiet and steady force of ex-

ample was introducing such innovations in the dressing of the hair, the carriage of the person, and the style of garments, that they were rapidly becoming uncommon girls; but they occupied a position lower than that of Nelly, who was the daughter of a ship's captain now in the asylum, or of Rebekah, who was the daughter of a minister, and had the key to all Truth. To Nelly, therefore, there came for a brief space this dream of love; it lasted, indeed, so brief a space, it had such slender foundations of reality, that, when it vanished, she ought to have let it go without a sigh, and have soon felt as if it never had come to her at all. This is difficult of accomplishment, even for women of strong nerves and good physique; but Nelly tried it, and partially succeeded. That is, no one knew her secret except Angela, who divined it, having special reason for this insight, and Rebekah, who perhaps had also her own reasons; but she was a self-contained woman, who kept her own secret.

‘She cannot,’ said Rebekah, watching Angela and Harry, who were walking together on

the Green—‘she cannot marry anybody else. It is impossible.’

‘But why,’ said Nelly—‘why do they not tell us, if they are to be married?’

‘There are many things,’ said Rebekah, ‘which Miss Kennedy does not tell us. She has never told us who she is, or where she came from, or how she gets command of money: or how she knows Miss Messenger: or what she was before she came to us. Because, Nelly, you may be sure of one thing: that Miss Kennedy is a lady born and bred. Not that I want to know more than she chooses to tell: and I am as certain of her goodness as I am certain of anything: and what this place will do for the girls if it succeeds no one can tell. Miss Kennedy will tell us perhaps, some day, why she has come among us, pretending to be a dressmaker.’

‘Oh!’ said Nelly. ‘What a thing for us that she did pretend! And oh, Rebekah, what a thing it would be—if she were to leave off pretending! But she would never desert us—never.’

‘No, she never would.’

Rebekah continued to watch them.

‘You see, Nelly, if she is a lady, he is a gentleman.’ Nelly blushed, and then blushed again for very shame at having blushed at all. ‘Some gentlemen, I am told, take delight in turning girls’ heads. He doesn’t do that. Has he ever said a word to you that he shouldn’t?’

‘No,’ said Nelly. ‘Never.’

‘Well, and he hasn’t to me: though as for you, he goes about saying everywhere that you are the prettiest girl in Stepney, next to Miss Kennedy: and as for me and the rest, he has always been like a brother, and a good deal better than most brothers are to their sisters. Being a gentleman, I mean, he is no match for you and me who are real workgirls: and there is nobody in the parish except Miss Kennedy for him.’

‘Yet he works for money.’

‘So does she. My dear, I don’t understand it: I never could understand it. Perhaps, some day, we shall know what it all means. There they are, making believe—they go on making believe and pretending, and they seem to enjoy it. Then they walk about together and play in

words with each other, one pretending not to understand, and so on. Miss Kennedy says, "But then I speak from hearsay, for I am only a dressmaker;" and he says, "So I read, because, of course, a cabinet-maker can know nothing of these things." Mr. Bunker, who ought to be made to learn the Epistle of St. James by heart, says dreadful things of both of them: and one his own nephew. But what does he know? Nothing.'

'But, Rebekah, Mr. Goslett cannot be a very great gentleman if he is Mr. Bunker's nephew. His father was a Sergeant in the army.'

'He is a gentleman by education and training. Well, some day we shall learn more. Meantime, I for one am contented that they should marry—are you, Nelly?'

'I too,' she replied, 'am contented if it will make Miss Kennedy happy.'

'He is not convinced of the Truth,' said Rebekah, making her little sectarian reservation, 'but any woman who would want a better husband must be a fool. As for you and me, now, after knowing those two, it will be best for us never to marry, rather than to marry

one of the drinking tobacco-smoking workmen who would have us.'

'Yes,' said Nelly, 'much best. I shall never marry anybody.'

Certainly, it was not likely that more young gentlemen would come their way. One Sunday evening, the girl, being alone with Miss Kennedy, took courage and dared to speak to her. In fact, it was Angela herself who began the talk.

'Let us talk, Nelly,' she began; 'we are quite alone. Tell me, my dear, what is on your mind.'

'Nothing,' said Nelly.

'Yes, there is something. Tell me what it is.'

'Oh, Miss Kennedy, I cannot tell you. It would be rudeness to speak of it.'

'There can be no rudeness, Nelly, between you and me. Tell me what you are thinking.'

Angela knew already what was in her mind, but after the fashion of her sex she dissembled. The brutality of Truth among the male sex is sometimes very painful. And yet we are so proud—some of us—of our earnest attachment to Truth.

‘Oh, Miss Kennedy, can you not see that he is suffering?’

‘Nelly!’ but she was not displeased.

‘He is getting thinner: he does not laugh as he used to: and he does not dance as much as he did. Oh, Miss Kennedy, can you not take pity on him?’

‘Nelly, you have not told me whom you mean. Nay’—as, with a sudden change of tone, she threw her arms about Nelly’s neck, and kissed her—‘nay, I know very well whom you mean, my dear.’

‘I have not offended you?’

‘No, you have not offended me. But, Nelly, answer me one question; answer it truthfully. Do you—from your own heart—wish me to take pity on him?’

Nelly answered frankly and truthfully.

‘Yes; because how can I wish anything but what will make you happy? Oh! how can any of us help wishing that? And he is the only man who can make you happy. And he loves you.’

‘You want him to love me—for my sake—



“She loves him herself,” Angela was thinking.

for my own sake. Nelly, dear child, you humble me.'

But Nelly did not understand. She had secretly offered up her humble sacrifice—her pair of turtle-doves—and she knew not that her secret was known.

'She loves him herself,' Angela was thinking, 'and she gives him up for my sake.'

'He is not,' Nelly went on, as if she could by any words of hers persuade Angela—'he is not like any of the common workmen: see how he walks, and how independent he is: and he talks like a gentleman; and he can do all the things that gentlemen learn to do. Who is there, among us all, that he could look at—except you?'

'Nelly, . . . do not make me vain.'

'As for you, Miss Kennedy, there is no man fit for you in all the world. You call yourself a dressmaker, but we know better. Oh! you are a lady. My father says so. He used to have great ladies sometimes on board his ship: he says that never was any one like you for talk and manner. Oh, we don't ask your

secret, if you have one. Only some of us—not I for one—are afraid that some day you will go away, and never come back to us again. What should we do then?’

‘My dear, I shall not desert you.’

‘And if you marry him, you will remain with us. A lady should marry a gentleman, I know—she could not marry any common man. But you are—so you tell us—only a dressmaker; and he is—he says—only a cabinet-maker. And Dick Coppin says that though he can use a lathe, he knows nothing at all about the trade, not even how they talk, nor anything about them. If you two have secrets, Miss Kennedy, tell them to each other.’

‘My secrets, if I have any, are very simple, Nelly; and very soon you shall know them: and as for his, I know them already.’

Angela was silent awhile, thinking over this thing. Then she kissed the girl, and whispered,—

‘Patience yet a little while, dear Nelly. Patience, and I will do—perhaps—what you desire.’

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‘Father,’ said Nelly later on that night, as they sat together by the fire—‘father, I spoke to Miss Kennedy to-night.’

‘What did you speak to her about, my dear?’

‘I told her that we knew—you and I—that she is a lady, whatever she may pretend.’

‘That is quite true, Nelly.’

‘And I said that Mr. Goslett is a gentleman, whatever *he* may pretend.’

‘That may be true, even though he is not a gentleman born. But that’s a very different thing, my dear.’

‘Why is it different?’

‘Because there are many ladies who go about among poor people, but no gentlemen, unless it’s the clergymen. Ladies seem to like it: they do it, however hard the work, for nothing; and all because it is their duty and an imitation of the Lord. Some of them go out nursing. I have told you how I took them out to Scutari: some of them go, not a bit afraid, into the foul courts, and find out the worst creatures in the world and help them: many of them give up their whole lives for the

poor and miserable. My dear, there is nothing that a good woman will shrink from : no misery, no den of wickedness—nothing. Sometimes I think Miss Kennedy must be one of those women. Yes : she's got a little money, and she has come here to work, in her own way, among the people here.'

'And Mr. Goslett, father?'

'Men don't do what women do. There may be something in what Mr. Bunker says, that he has reasons of his own for coming here and hiding himself.'

'Oh, father, you don't mean it ! And his own uncle, too, to say such a thing !'

'Yes, his own uncle. Mr. Goslett certainly does belong to the place. Though why Bunker should bear him so much malice is more than I can tell.'

'And—father—there is another reason why he should stay here.' Nelly blushed and laughed merrily.

'What is that, my dear?'

Nelly kissed him and laughed again.

'It is your time for a pipe. Let me fill it for you. And the Sunday ration ; here it is—

and here is a light. Oh, father—to be a sailor so long, and to have no eyes in your head!’

‘What!’ He understood now. ‘You mean Miss Kennedy! Nell, my dear, forgive me. I was thinking that perhaps you——’

‘No, father,’ she replied hurriedly. ‘That could never be. I want nothing, but to stay on here with you and Miss Kennedy, who has been so good to us that we can never—never—thank her enough—nor can we wish her too much joy. But please never, never say that again.’

Her eyes filled with tears.

Captain Sorensen took a book from the table. It was that book which so many people have constantly in their mouths, and yet it never seems to get into their hearts: the book which is so seldom read and so much commented upon. He turned it over till he found a certain passage beginning, ‘Who can find a virtuous woman?’ He read this right through to the end: one passage—‘She stretcheth out her hand unto the poor: yea, she reacheth forth her hands unto the needy’—he read twice;

and the last line—‘Let her own works praise her in the gates’—he read three times.

‘My dear,’ he concluded, ‘to pleasure Miss Kennedy you would do more than give up a lover: ay, and with a cheerful heart.’

CHAPTER XLI.

BOXING-NIGHT.

‘LET us keep Christmas,’ said Angela, ‘with something like original treatment. We will not dance, because we do that nearly every night.’

‘Let us,’ said Harry, ‘dress up and act.’

What were they to act? That he would find for them. How were they to dress? That they were to find for themselves. The feature of the Christmas festival was, they were to be mummers, and that there was to be mummicking, and, of course, there would be a little feasting, and perhaps a little singing.

‘We must have just such a programme,’ said Angela to her master of ceremonies, ‘as if you were preparing it for the Palace of Delight.’

‘This is the only Palace of Delight,’ said Harry, ‘that we shall ever see. For my own part I desire no other.’

‘But, you know, we are going to have another one, much larger than this little place. Have you forgotten all your projects?’

Harry laughed: it was strange how persistently Miss Kennedy returned to the subject again and again; how seriously she talked about it; how she dwelt upon it.

‘We must have,’ she continued, ‘sports which will cost nothing, with dresses which we can make for ourselves. Of course we must have guests to witness them.’

‘Guests cost money,’ said Harry. ‘But, of course, in a Palace of Delight money must not be considered. That would be treason to your principles.’

‘We shall not give our guests anything except the cold remains of the Christmas dinner. And as for champagne, we can make our own with a few lemons and a little sugar. Do not forbid us to invite an audience.’

Fortunately, a present which arrived from their patron, Miss Messenger, the day before

Christmas Day, enabled them to give their guests a substantial supper at no cost whatever. The present took the form of several hampers, addressed to Miss Kennedy, with a note from the donor conveying her love to the girls and best wishes for the next year, when she hoped to make their acquaintance. The hampers contained turkeys, sausages, ducks, geese, hams, tongues, and the like.

Meantime Harry, as stage manager and dramatist, had devised the tableaux, and the girls between them devised the dresses from a book of costumes. Christmas Day, as everybody remembers, fell last year on a Sunday. This gave the girls the whole of Saturday afternoon and evening with Monday morning for the conversion of the trying-on room into the stage and the show-room for the audience. But the rehearsals took a fortnight, for some of the girls were stupid and some were shy, though all were willing to learn, and Harry was patient. Besides, there was the chance of wearing the most beautiful dresses, and no one was left out: in the allegory, a pastoral invented by their manager, there was a part for every one.

The gift of Miss Messenger made it possible to have two sets of guests ; one set consisting of the girls' female relations, and a few private friends of Miss Kennedy's who lived and suffered in the neighbourhood, for the Christmas dinner, held on Monday ; and the other set was carefully chosen from a long list for the select audience in the evening. Among them were Dick and his friend the ex-Chartist cobbler, and a few leading spirits of the Advanced Club. They wanted an audience who would read between the lines.

The twenty-sixth day of last December was, in the neighbourhood of Stepney, dull and overcast ; it promised to be a day of rebuke for all quiet folk, because it was a general holiday, one of those four terrible days when the people flock in droves to favourite haunts if it is in the summer, or hang about public-houses if it is winter ; when, in the evening, the air is hideous with the shouts of those who roll about the pavements : a day when even Comus and his rabble rout are fain to go home for fear of being hustled and evilly treated by the holiday-makers of famous London town : a day when

the peaceful and the pious, the temperate and the timid, stay at home. But to Angela it was a great day, sweet and precious—to use the language of ancient Puritan and modern prig—because it was the first attempt towards the realisation of her great dream; because her girls on this night for the first time showed the fruits of her training in the way they played their parts, their quiet bearing and their new refinement. After the performances of this evening she looked forward with confidence to her palace.

The day began, then, at half-past one with the big dinner. All the girls could bring their mothers, sisters, and female relations generally, who were informed that Miss Messenger, the mysterious person who interfered perpetually, like a goddess out of a machine, with some new gift, or some device for their advantage, was the giver of the feast.

It was a good and ample Christmas dinner, served in the long workroom by Angela and the girls themselves. There were the turkeys of the hamper, roasted with sausages, and roast

beef and roast fowls and roast goose and roast pork, with an immense supply of the vegetables dear to London people; and after this first course there were plum puddings and mince pies. Messenger's ale, with the stout so much recommended by Bunker, flowed freely, and after the dinner there was handed to each a glass of port. None but women and children—no boy over eight being allowed—were present at the feast; and when it was over most of the women got up and went away, not without some little talk with Angela, and some present in kind from the benevolent Miss Messenger. Then they cleared all away and set out the tables again, with the same provisions, for the supper of the evening, at which there would be hungry men.

All the afternoon they spent in completing their arrangements. The guests began to arrive at five. The music was supplied by Angela herself, who did not act, with Captain Sorensen and Harry. The piano was brought downstairs, and stood in the hall outside the trying-on room.

The performance was to commence at six,

but everybody had come long before half-past five. At a quarter to six the little orchestra began to play the old English tunes dear to pantomimes.

At the ringing of a bell the music changed to a low monotonous plaint, and the curtain slowly rose on a tableau.

There was a large, bare, empty room ; its sole furniture was a table and three chairs ; in one corner was a pile of shavings ; upon them sat crouching, with her knees drawn up, the pale and worn figure of a girl ; beside her were the crutches which showed that she was a cripple ; her white cheek was wasted and hollow ; her chin was thrust forward as if she was in suffering almost intolerable. During the tableau she moved not, save to swing slowly backwards and forwards upon the shavings which formed her bed.

On the table—for it was night—was a candle in a ginger-beer bottle, and two girls sat at the table working hard ; their needles were running a race with starvation ; their clothes were in rags ; their hair was gathered up in careless knots ; their cheeks were pale ; they were

pinched and cold and feeble with hunger and privation.

Said one of the women present, 'Twopence an hour they can make. Poor things! poor things!'

'Dick,' whispered the cobbler, 'you make a note of it; I guess what's coming.'

The spectators shivered with sympathy. They knew so well what it meant: some of them had themselves dwelt amid these garrets of misery and suffering.

Then voices were heard outside in the street singing.

They were the waits, and they sang the joyful hymns of Christmas. When the working girls heard the singing, they paid no heed whatever, plying the needle fast and furiously; and the girl in the shavings paid no heed, slowly swinging to and fro in her pain and hunger. At the sight of this callous contempt, this disregard of the invitation to rejoice, as if there was neither hope nor joy for such as themselves, with only a mad desire to work for something to stay the dreadful pains of hunger, some of the women among the spectators wept aloud.

Then the waits went away, and there was silence again.

Then one of the girls—it was Nelly—stopped, and leaned back in her chair with her hand to her heart: the work fell from her lap upon the floor; she sprang to her feet, threw up her hands, and fell in a lifeless heap upon the floor. The other girl went on with her sewing; and the cripple went on swinging backwards and forwards. For they were all three so miserable, that the misery of one could no more touch the other two.

The curtain dropped. The tableau represented, of course, the girls who work for an employer.

After five minutes it rose again. There were the same girls and others; they were sitting at work in a cheerful and well-furnished room; they were talking and laughing. The clock struck six, and they laid aside the work, pushed back the table, and advanced to the front, singing all together. Their faces were bright and happy; they were well dressed; they looked well fed; there was no trouble among them at all; they chattered like singing-birds; they ran and played.

Then Captain Sorensen came in with his fiddle, and first he played a merry tune, at the sound of which the girls caught each other by the waist, and fell to dancing the old Greek ring. Then he played a quadrille, and they danced that simple figure, and as if they liked it; and then he played a waltz, and they whirled round and round.

This was the labour of girls for themselves. Everybody understood perfectly what was meant without the waste of words. Some of the mothers present wiped their eyes, and told their neighbours that this was no play-acting, but the sweet and blessed truth; and that the joy was real, because the girls were working for themselves, and there were no naggings, no fines, no temper, no bullying, no long hours.

After this there was a concert, which seemed a falling off in point of excitement. But it was pretty. Captain Sorensen played some rattling sea ditties; then Miss Kennedy and Mr. Goslett played a duet; then the girls sang a madrigal in parts, so that it was wonderful to hear them, thinking how ignorant they were six months before. Then Miss Kennedy played a solo,

and then the girls sang another song. By what magic, by what mystery, were girls so transformed? Then the audience talked together, and whispered that it was all the doing of that one girl—Miss Kennedy—who was believed by everybody to be a lady born and bred, but pretended to be a dressmaker. She it was who got the girls together, gave them the house, found work for them, arranged the time and the duties, and paid them week by week for shorter hours, better wages. It was she who persuaded them to spend their evenings with her instead of trapesing about the streets getting into mischief; it was she who taught them the singing and all manner of pretty things; and they were not spoiled by it, except that they would have nothing more to say to the rough lads and shopboys who had formerly paid them rude court and jested with them on Stepney Green. Uppish they certainly were; what mother would find fault with a girl for holding up her head and respecting herself? And as for manners, why, no one could tell what a difference there was.

The Chartist looked on with a little sus-

picion at first, which gradually changed to the liveliest satisfaction.

‘Dick,’ he whispered to his friend and disciple, ‘I am sure that if the working men like, they may find the swells their real friends. See, now we’ve got all the power: they can’t take it from us; very good, then, who are the men we should suspect? Why, those who’ve got to pay the wages—the manufacturers and such. Not the swells. Make a note of that, Dick. It may be the best card you’ve got to play. A thousand places such as this—planted all about England, started at first by a swell—why, man, the working classes would have not only all the power, but all the money. Oh, if were ten years younger! What are they going to do next?’

The next thing they did pleased the women, but the men did not seem to care much about it, and the Chartist went on developing the new idea to Dick, who drank it all in, seeing that here, indeed, was a practical and attractive idea, even though it meant a new departure. But the preacher of a new doctrine has generally a better chance than one who only hammers away at an old one.

The stage showed one figure. A beautiful girl, her hair bound in a fillet, clad in Greek dress, simple, flowing, graceful, stood upon a low pedestal. She was intended—it was none other than Nelly—to represent woman dressed as she should be. One after the other there advanced upon the stage, and stood beside this statue, women dressed as women ought not to be: there they were, the hideous fashions of generations; the pinched waists, monstrous hats, high peaks, hoops, and crinolines, hair piled up, hair stuffed out, gigot sleeves, high waists, tight skirts, bending walk, boots with high heels—an endless array.

When Nelly got down from her pedestal and the show was over, Harry advanced to the front and made a little speech. He reminded his hearers that the Association was only six months old; he begged them to consider what was its position now. To be sure, the girls had been started, and that, he said, was the great difficulty; but, the start once made and prejudice removed, they found themselves with work to do, and were now paying their own way and doing well; before long they would be able to take in more hands; it was not all

work with them, but there was plenty of play, as they knew. Meantime the girls invited everybody to have supper with them, and after supper there would be a little dance.

They stayed to supper, and they appreciated the gift of Miss Messenger ; then they had the little dance—Dick Coppin now taking his part without shame. While the dancing went on, the Chartist sat in a corner of the room and talked with Angela. When he went away, his heart—which was large and generous—burned within him, and he had visions of a time when the voices of the poor shall not be raised against the rich, nor the minds of the rich hardened against the poor. Perhaps he came unconsciously nearer to Christianity, this man who was a scoffer and an unbeliever, that night than he had ever before. To have faith in the future forms, indeed, a larger part of the Christian religion than some of us ever realise. And to believe in a single woman is one step, however small, towards believing in the Divine Man.

CHAPTER XLII.

NOT JOSEPHUS, BUT ANOTHER.

THE attractions of a yard peopled with ghosts, discontented figure-heads, and an old man, are great at first, but not likely to be lasting if one does not personally see or converse with the ghosts, and if the old man becomes monotonous. We expect too much of old men. Considering their years we think their recollections must be wonderful. One says, ‘Good heavens! Methuselah must recollect William the Conqueror, and King John, and Sir John Falstaff, to say nothing of the Battle of Waterloo!’ As a matter of fact, Methuselah generally remembers nothing except that where Cheapside now stands was once a green field. As for Shakespeare, and Coleridge, and Charles Lamb, he knows nothing whatever about them. You see, if he had taken so much interest in life as to care about

things going on, he would very soon, like his contemporaries, have worn out the machine, and would be lying, like them, in the grassy enclosure.

Harry continued to go to the carver's yard for some time, but nothing more was to be learnt from him. He knew the family history, however, by this time, pretty well. The Coppins of Stepney, like all middle-class families, had experienced many ups and downs. They had been churchwardens; they had been bankrupts; they had practised many trades; and once there was a Coppin who died leaving houses—twelve houses—three apiece to his children—a meritorious Coppin. Where were those houses now? Absorbed by the omnivorous Uncle Bunker. And how Uncle Bunker got those belonging to Caroline Coppin could not now be ascertained, except from Uncle Bunker himself. Everywhere there are scrapers and scatterers; the scrapers are few, and the scatterers are many. By what scatterer or what process of scattering did Caroline lose her houses?

Meantime, Harry did not feel himself

obliged to hold his tongue upon the subject; and everybody knew, before long, that something was going on likely to be prejudicial to Mr. Bunker. People whispered that Bunker was going to be caught out; this rumour lent to the unwilling agent some of the interest which attaches to a criminal. Some went so far as to say that they had always suspected him because he was so ostentatious in his honesty; and this is a safe thing to say, because any person may be reasonably suspected; and if we did not suspect all the world, why the machinery of bolts and bars, keys and patent safes? But it is the wise man who suspects the right person, and it is the justly proud man who strikes an attitude and says, 'What did I tell you?' As yet, however, the suspicions were vague. Bunker, for his part, though not generally a thin-skinned man, easily perceived that there was a change in the way he was received and regarded; people looked at him with marked interest in the streets; they turned their heads and looked after him; they talked about him as he approached; they smiled with meaning; Josephus Coppin met him one day,

and asked him why he would not tell his nephew how he obtained those three houses, and what consideration he gave for them. He began, especially of an evening, over brandy and water, to make up mentally, over and over again, his own case, so that it might be presented at the right moment absolutely perfect and without a flaw; a paragon among cases. His nephew, whom he now regarded with a loathing almost lethal, was impudent enough to go about saying that he had got those houses unlawfully, was he? Very good; he would have such law as is to be had in England for the humiliation, punishment, stamping out, and ruining of that nephew; ay, if it cost him five hundred pounds, he would. He should like to make his case public; he was not afraid, not a bit; let all the world know: the more the story was known, the more would his contemporaries admire his beautiful and exemplary virtue, patience, and moderation. There were, he said, with the smile of benevolence and the blush of modesty which so well become the good man, transactions, money transactions, between himself and his

sister-in-law, especially after her marriage with a man who was a secret scatterer. These money matters had been partly squared by the transfer of the houses, which he took in part payment; the rest he forgave when Caroline died, and when, which showed his own goodness in an electric light, he took over the boy to bring him up to some honest trade, though he was a beggar. Where were the proofs of these transactions? Unfortunately they were all destroyed by fire some years since, after having been carefully preserved, and docketed, and endorsed, as is the duty of every careful man of business.

Now, by dint of repeating this precious story over and over again, the worthy man came to believe it entirely, and to believe that other people would believe it as well. It seemed, in fact, so like the truth, that it would deceive even experts, and pass for that priceless article. At the time when Caroline died, and the boy went to stay with him, no one asked any questions, because it seemed nobody's business to inquire into the interests of the child. After the boy was taken away it

gradually became known among the surviving members of the family that the houses had long before, owing to the profligate extravagance of the Sergeant—as careful a man as ever marched—passed into the hands of Bunker, who now had all the Coppin houses. Everything was clean forgotten by this time. And the boy must needs turn up again, asking questions. A young villain! A serpent! But he should be paid out.

A very singular accident prevented the ‘paying out’ quite in the sense intended by Mr. Bunker. It happened in this way.

One day when Miss Messenger’s cabinet-maker and joiner-in-ordinary, having little or nothing to do, was wandering about the Brewery looking about him, lazily watching the process of beer-making on a large and extensive scale, and exchanging the compliments of the season, which was near the new year, with the workmen, it happened that he passed the room in which Josephus had sat for forty years among the juniors. The door stood open and he looked in, as he had often done before, to nod a friendly salutation to his cousin. There

Josephus sat, with grey hair, an elderly man among boys, mechanically ticking off entries among the lads. His place was in the warm corner near the fire : beside him stood a large and massive safe ; the same safe out of which during an absence of three minutes the country notes had been so mysteriously stolen.

The story, of course, was well known. Josephus's version of the thing was also well known ; everybody, further, knew that until the mystery of that robbery was cleared up, Josephus would remain a junior on thirty shillings a week ; lastly, everybody, with the kindliness of heart common to our glorious humanity, firmly believed that Josephus had really cribbed those notes, but had been afraid to present them, and so dropped them into the fire or down a drain. It is truly remarkable to observe how deeply we respect, adore, and venerate virtue, insomuch that we all go about pretending to be virtuous ; yet how little we believe in the virtue of each other ! It is also remarkable to reflect upon the extensive fields still open to the moralist after all these years of preaching and exhorting.

Now as Harry looked into the room, his eye fell upon the safe, and a curious thing occurred. The fragment of a certain letter from Bob Coppin, in which he sent a message by his friend to his cousin, Squaretoes Josephus, quite suddenly and unexpectedly returned to his memory. Further, the words assumed a meaning.

‘Josephus,’ he said, stepping into the office, ‘lend me a piece of paper and a pencil. Thank you.’

He wrote down the words, exactly as he recollected them, half destroyed by the tearing of the letter.

. . . . ‘Josephus, my cousin, that he will . . . nd the safe the bundle for a lark. Josephus is a Squaretoes. I hate a man who won’t drink. He will if he looks there.’

When he had written these words down he read them over again, while the lads looked on with curiosity and some resentment. Cabinet-makers and joiners have no business to swagger about the office of young gentlemen who are clerks in breweries, as if it were their own

place. It is an innovation, a levelling of rank.

‘Josephus,’ Harry whispered, ‘you remember your cousin, Bob Coppin?’

‘Yes, but these are office hours; conversation is not allowed in the juniors’ room.

He spoke as if he was still a boy, as indeed he was, having been confined to the society of boys, and having drawn the pay of a boy for so many years.

‘Never mind rules. Tell me all about Bob.’

‘He was a drinker and a spendthrift. That’s enough about him.’ Josephus spoke in a whisper, being anxious not to discuss the family disgrace among his fellow-clerks.

‘Good. Were you a friend as well as a cousin of his?’

‘No; I never was. I was respectable—in those days—and desirous of getting my character high for steadiness. I went to evening lectures, and taught in the Wesleyan Sunday schools. Of course, when the notes were stolen it was no use trying any more for character; that was gone: a young man suspected of stealing fourteen thousand pounds

can't get any character at all. So I gave up attending the evening lectures, and left off teaching in the school and going to church and everything.'

'You were a great fool, Josephus. You ought to have gone on and fought it out. Now, then, on the day that you lost the money had you seen Bob? Do you remember?'

'That day?' the unlucky junior replied. 'I remember every hour as plain as if it was to-day. Yes, I saw Bob. He came to the office half an hour before I lost the notes; he wanted me to go out with him in the evening—I forget where—some gardens and dancing and prodigalities. I refused to go. In the evening I saw him again, and he did nothing but laugh while I was in misery. It seemed cruel, and the more I suffered the louder he laughed.'

'Did you never see Bob again?'

'No; he went away to sea, and he came home and went away again. But somehow I never saw him. It is twenty years now since he went away last, and was never heard of, nor his ship. So of course he's dead long ago. But what does it matter about Bob? And

these are office hours, and there will really be things said if we go on talking. Do go away.'

Harry obeyed and left him. But he went straight to the office of the Chief Accountant, and requested an interview. The Chief Accountant sent word that he could communicate his business through one of the clerks. Harry replied that his business was of a nature which could not be communicated by a clerk, that it was very serious and important business, which must be imparted to the chief alone; and that he would wait his convenience in the outer office. Presently he was ushered into the presence of the great man.

'This is very extraordinary,' said the official. 'What can your business be which is so important that it must not be entrusted to the clerks? Now come to the point, young man. My time is valuable.'

'I want you to authorise me to make a little examination in the junior clerks' room.'

'What examination? And why?'

Harry gave him the fragment of the letter, and explained where he found it.

'I understand nothing. What do you learn from this fragment?'

‘There is no date,’ said Harry, ‘but that matters very little. You will observe that it clearly refers to my cousin, Josephus Coppin.’

‘That seems evident. Josephus is not a common name.’

‘You know my cousin’s version of the loss of those notes?’

‘Certainly; he said they must have been stolen during the two or three minutes that he was out of the room.’

‘Yes. Now—’ Harry wrote a few words to fill up the broken sentences of the letter—‘read that, sir.’

‘Good heavens!’

‘My cousin tells me too,’ he went on, ‘that this fellow, Bob Coppin, was in the office half an hour before the notes were missed: why, very likely he was at the time hanging about the place: and that in the evening when his cousin was in an agony of distress, Bob was laughing as if the whole thing was a joke.’

‘Upon my word,’ said the Chief, ‘it seems plausible.’

‘We can try the thing at once,’ said Harry. ‘But I should like you to be present when we do.’

‘Undoubtedly I will be present. Come, let us go at once. By the way, you are the young man recommended by Miss Messenger, are you not?’

‘Yes; not that I have the honour of knowing Miss Messenger personally.’

The Chief Accountant laughed. Cabinet-makers and joiners do not generally know young ladies of position. But this was such a remarkably cheeky young workman.

They took with them four stout fellows from those who toss about the casks of beer. The safe was one of the larger kind, standing three feet six inches high on a strong wooden box with an open front. It was in the corner next to Josephus’s seat: between the back of the safe and the wall was a space of an inch or so.

‘I must trouble you to change your seat,’ said the Chief Accountant to Josephus. ‘We are about to move this safe.’

Josephus rose, and the men presently with mighty efforts lugged the great heavy thing a foot or two from its place.

‘Will you look, sir?’ asked Harry. ‘If there is anything there I should like you, who know the whole story, to find it.’

The Chief stooped over the safe and looked behind it. Everybody now was aware that something was going to happen, and though pens continued to be dipped into inkstands with zeal, and heads to be bent over desks with the devotion which always seizes a junior clerk in presence of his chief, all eyes were furtively turned to Josephus's corner.

‘There is a bundle of papers,’ he said. ‘Thank you.’ Harry picked them up and placed them in his hands.

The only person who paid no heed to the proceedings was the one most concerned.

The Chief Accountant received them; a rolled bundle, not a tied-up parcel, and covered inch deep with black dust. He opened it and glanced at the contents. Then a strange and unaccountable look came into his eyes as he handed them to Josephus.

‘Will you oblige me, Mr. Coppin,’ he said, ‘by examining these papers?’

It was the first time that the title of Mr. had been bestowed upon Josephus during all the years of his long servitude. He was troubled by it; and he could not understand

the expression in his chief's eyes: and when he turned to Harry for an explanation, he met eyes in which the same sympathy and pity were expressed: when he turned to the boys, his fellow-clerks, he was struck by their faces of wondering expectation.

What was going to happen?

Recovering his presence of mind, he held out the dusty papers and shook the dust off them.

Then he began slowly to obey orders and to examine them.

Suddenly he began to turn them over with fierce eagerness. His eyes flashed; he gasped.

'Come, Josephus,' said his cousin, taking his arm; 'gently, gently. What are they—these papers?'

The man laughed—an hysterical laugh.

'They are—ha! ha!—they are—ha! ha! ha!' He did not finish because his voice failed him, but he dropped into a chair with his head in his hands.

'They are country bank notes, and other papers,' said Harry, taking them from his

cousin's hands. He had interpreted the missing words rightly.

The Chief looked round the room. 'Young men,' he said solemnly, 'a wonderful thing has happened. After many years of undeserved suspicion and unmerited punishment, Mr. Coppin's character is cleared at last. We cannot restore to him the years he has lost, but we can rejoice that his innocence is established.'

'Come, Josephus,' said Harry, 'bear your good fortune as you have borne the bad. Rouse yourself.'

The senior junior clerk lifted his head and looked around. His cheeks were white: his eyes were filled with tears: his lips were trembling.

'Take your cousin home,' said the Chief to Harry, 'and then come back to my office.'

Harry led Josephus, unresisting, home to the Boarding-house.

'We have had a shock, Mrs. Bormalack. Nothing to be alarmed about, quite the contrary. The bank notes have been found after all these years, and my cousin has earned his

promotion and recovered his character. Give him some brandy-and-water and make him lie down for a bit.' For the man was dazed. He could not understand as yet what had happened.

Harry placed him in the arm-chair and left him to the care of the landlady. Then he went back to the Brewery.

The Chief Brewer was with the Chief Accountant, and they were talking over what was best to be done. They said very kind things about intelligence, without which good fortune and lucky finds are wasted; and they promised to represent Harry's conduct in a proper light to Miss Messenger, who would be immediately communicated with. And Josephus would at once receive a very substantial addition to his pay, a better position, and more responsible work.

'May I suggest, gentlemen,' said Harry, 'that a man who is fifty-five, and has all his life been doing the simple work of a junior, may not be found equal to more responsible work?'

'That may be the case.'

‘My cousin, when the misfortune happened, left off taking any interest in things. I believe he has never opened a book or learned anything in all these years.’

‘Well, we shall see.’ A workman was not to be taken into counsel. ‘There is, however, something here which seems to concern yourself. Your mother was one Caroline Coppin, was she not?’

‘Yes.’

‘Then these papers, which were deposited by some persons unknown with Mr. Messenger, most likely for greater care, and placed in the safe by him, belong to you, and I hope will prove of value to you.’

Harry took them without much interest, and came away.

In the evening Josephus held a reception. All his contemporaries in the Brewery, the men who entered with himself; all those who had passed over his head, all those with whom he had been a junior in the Brewery, called to congratulate him. At the moment he felt as if this universal sympathy fully made up for all his sufferings of the past. Nor was it until the

morning that he partly perceived the truth, that no amount of sympathy would restore his vanished youth and give him what he had lost. But he will never quite understand this; and he looked upon himself as having begun again from the point where he stopped. When the reception was over and the last man gone, he began to talk about his future.

‘I shall go on again with the evening course,’ he said, ‘just where I left it off. I remember we were having Monday for book-keeping by single and double entry, Tuesday for French, Thursday for arithmetic—we were in mixed fractions,—and Friday for Euclid. Then I shall take up my class at the Sunday school again, and I shall become a full Church member of the Wesleyan connection. For though my father was once churchwarden at Stepney Church, I always favoured the Wesleyans myself.’

He talked as if he was a boy again, with all his life before him; and, indeed, at the moment he thought he was.

CHAPTER XLIII.

OH, MY PROPHETIC SOUL!

HARRY thought nothing about the papers which were found among the notes that evening, because he was wholly engaged in the contemplation of a man who had suddenly gone back thirty-five years in his life. The grey hairs, thin at the top and gone at the temples, were not, it is true, replaced by the curly brown locks of youth, though one thinks that Josephus must always have been a straight-haired young man. But it was remarkable to hear that man of fifty-five talking as if the years had rolled backwards, and he could take up the thread of life where he had dropped it so long ago. He spoke of his evening lectures and his Sunday school with the enthusiasm of a boy. He would study—work of that sort always paid: he would prepare his lessons for the school

beforehand, and stand well with the superintendent: it was good for men in business offices, he said, to have a good character with the superintendent. Above all, he would learn French and book-keeping, with mensuration, gauging, and astronomy, at the Beaumont Institute. All these things would come in useful, some time or the other, at the Brewery; besides, it helps a man to be considered studious in his habits. He became, in fact, in imagination a young man once more. And because in the old days, when he had a character to earn, he did not smoke tobacco, so now he forgot that former solace of the day, his evening pipe.

‘The Brewery,’ he said, ‘is a splendid thing to get into. You can rise: you may become—ah! even Chief Accountant: you may look forward to draw over a thousand a year at the Brewery, if you are steady and well conducted, and get a good name. It is not every one, mind you, gets the chance of such a service. And once in, always in. That’s the pride of the Brewery. No turning out: there you stay, with your salary always rising, till you die.’

In the morning, the exultation of spirits

was exchanged for a corresponding depression. Josephus went to the Brewery, knowing that he should sit on that old seat of his no longer.

He went to look at it : the wooden stool was worn black : the desk was worn black : he knew every cut and scratch in the lid at which he had written so many years. There were all the books at which he had worked so long : not hard work, nor work requiring thought, but simple entering and ticking off of names, which a man can do mechanically—on summer afternoons, with the window open and an occasional bee buzzing in from Hainault Forest, and the sweet smell of the vats and the drowsy rolling of the machinery—one can do the work half asleep and never make any mistake. Now he would have to undertake some different kind of work, more responsible work : he would have to order and direct : he would have a chair instead of a stool, and a table instead of a desk. So that he began to wish that he had in the old days gone farther in his studies—but he was always slow at learning—before the accident happened ; and to wonder if anything at all remained of the knowledge

he had then painfully acquired, after all these years.

As a matter of fact, nothing remained. Josephus had become perfectly, delightfully, inconceivably stupid. He had forgotten everything, and could now learn no new thing. Pending the decision of Miss Messenger, to whom the case was referred, they tried him with all sorts of simple work — correspondence, answering letters, any of the things which require a little intelligence. Josephus could do nothing. He sat like a helpless boy and looked at the documents. Then they let him alone, and for a while he came every day, sat all day long, half asleep, and did nothing, and was much less happy than when he had been kept at work from nine o'clock in the morning till six o'clock at night.

When Harry remembered the packet of papers placed in his hand, which was on the following morning, he read them. And the effect of his reading was that he did not go to work that morning at all.

He was not a lawyer, and the principal paper was a legal instrument, the meaning of

which it took him some little time to make out.

‘Hum—hum—um—why can’t they write plain English? “I give to my said trustees John Skelton and Benjamin Bunker the three freehold houses as follows that called number twenty-nine on Stepney Green forty-five in Beaumont Square and twenty-three in Redman’s Row upon trust to apply the rents and income of the same as in their absolute discretion they may think fit for the maintenance education and benefit of the said Caroline until she be twenty-one years old or until she marry and to invest from time to time the accumulations of such rents and income as is hereintofore provided and to apply the same when invested in all respects as I direct concerning the last above - mentioned premises And when the said Caroline shall attain the age of twenty-one or shall marry I direct my said trustees to pay to her the said rents and income and the income of the accumulation of the same if any during her life by four equal quarterly payments for her sole and separate use free from the debts and engagements of any

husband or husbands she may marry and I direct that on the death of the said Caroline my said trustees shall hold and stand possessed of all the said premises for such person or persons and in such manner in all respects as the said Caroline shall by deed or will appoint And in default of such appointment and so far as the same shall not extend upon trust"—and so on—and so on.'

Harry read this document with a sense, at first, of mystification. Then he read it a second time, and began to understand it.

'The houses,' he said, 'my mother's houses, are hers, free from any debts contracted by her husband: they are vested in trustees for her behalf: she could not sell or part with them. And the trustees were John Skelton and Benjamin Bunker. John Skelton—gone to Abraham's bosom, I suppose. Benjamin Bunker—where will he go to? The houses were tied up—settled—entailed.'

He read the document right through for the third time.

'So,' he said. 'The house at number twenty-nine Stepney Green. That is the

house which Bunker calls his own; the house of the Associated Dressmakers; and it's mine—mine.' He clenched his fist and looked dangerous. 'Then the house at twenty-three Redman's Row, and at forty-five Beaumont Square. Two more houses. Also mine. And Bunker, the perfidious Bunker, calls them all his own! What shall be done to Bunker?'

'Next,' he went on, after reading the document again, 'Bunker is a fraudulent trustee, and his brother trustee too, unless he has gone dead. Of that there can be no doubt whatever. That virtuous and benevolent Bunker was my mother's trustee—and mine. And he calmly appropriates the trust to his own uses—Uncle Bunker! Uncle Bunker!

'I knew from the beginning that there was something wrong. First, I thought he had taken a sum of money from Lord Jocelyn. Then I found out that he had got possession of houses in a mysterious manner. And now I find that he was simply the trustee. Wicked Uncle Bunker!'

Armed with his precious document, he put on his hat and walked straight off, resolution on



'Mr. Bunker dropped into a chair.'

his front, towards his uncle's office. He arrived just when Mr. Bunker was about to start on a daily round among his houses. By this frequent visitation he kept up the hearts of his tenants, and taught them the meaning of necessity ; so that they put by their money and religiously paid the rent. Else——

‘Pray,’ said Harry, ‘be so good as to take off your hat, and sit down and have five minutes’ talk with me.’

‘No, sir,’ said Bunker, ‘I will not. You can go away, do your hear? Be off: let me lock my office and go about my own business.’

‘Do take off your hat, my uncle.’

‘Go, sir, do you hear?’

‘Sit down and let us talk—my honest—trustee!’

Mr. Bunker dropped into a chair.

In all the conversations and dramatic scenes made up in his own mind to account for the possession of the houses it had never occurred to him that the fact of his having been a trustee would come to light. All were dead, except himself, who were concerned with that trust: he had forgotten by this time that

there was any deed: by ignoring the trust he simplified, to his own mind, the transfer of the houses: and during all these years he had almost forgotten the obligations of the trust.

‘What do you mean?’ he stammered.

‘Virtuous uncle! I mean that I know all. Do you quite understand me? I mean really and truly all. Yes: all that there is to know: all that you hide away in your own mind and think that no one knows.’

‘What—what—what do you know?’

‘First, I know which the houses are—I mean, my houses—my mother’s houses. The house in Stepney Green that you have let to Miss Kennedy is one; a house in Beaumont Square—do you wish to know the number?—is another; and a house in Redman’s Row—and do you want to know the number of that?—is the third. You have collected the rents of those houses and paid those rents to your own account for twenty years and more.’

‘Go on. Let us hear what you pretend to know. Suppose they were Caroline’s houses, what then?’ He spoke with an attempt at bounce; but he was pale, and his eyes were unsteady.

‘This next. These houses, man of probity, were not my mother’s property to dispose of as she pleased.’

‘Oh! whose were they, then?’

‘They were settled upon her and her heirs after her; and the property was placed in the hands of two trustees: yourself, my praise-worthy; and a certain John Skelton, of whom I know nothing. Presumably, he is dead.’

Mr. Bunker made no reply at all. But his cheek grew paler.

‘Shall I repeat this statement, or is that enough for you?’ asked Harry. ‘The situation is pretty, though perhaps not novel: the heir has gone away, probably never to come back again; the trustee sole surviving, no doubt receives the rents. Heir comes back. Trustee swears the houses are his own. When the trustee is brought before a court of law and convicted, the judge says that the case is one of peculiar enormity, and must be met by transportation for five-and-twenty years; five—and—twenty—years, my Patriarch! think of that, in uniform and with short hair.’

Mr. Bunker said nothing. But by the

agitation of his fingers it was plain that he was thinking a great deal.

‘I told you,’ cried Harry. ‘I warned you, some time ago, that you must now begin to think seriously about handcuffs and prison, and men in blue. The time has come, now, when, unless you make restitution of all that you have taken, action will be taken, and you will realise what it is that people think of the fraudulent trustee. Uncle Bunker, my heart bleeds for you.’

‘Why did you come here?’ asked his uncle piteously. ‘Why did you come here at all? We got on very well without you—very well and comfortably, indeed.’

This seemed a feeble sort of bleat. But, in fact, the Bunker’s mind was for the moment prostrated. He had no sound resistance left.

‘I offered you,’ he went on, ‘twenty-five pounds—to go. I’ll double it—there. I’ll give you fifty pounds to go, if you’ll go at once. So that there will be an end to all this trouble.’

‘Consider,’ said Harry, ‘there’s the rent of Miss Kennedy’s house—sixty-five pounds a year for that : there’s the house in Beaumont Square

—fifty for that ; and the house in Redman's Row at five-and-twenty at least : comes to a hundred and forty pounds a year, which you have drawn, my precious uncle, for twenty-one years at least. That makes, without counting interest, two thousand nine hundred and forty pounds. And you want to buy me off for fifty pounds !'

'Not half the money—not half the money,' his uncle groaned. 'There's repairs and painting—and bad tenants : not half the money.'

'We will say, then,' lightly replied his nephew, as if nine hundred were a trifle, 'we will say two thousand pounds. The heir to that property has come back : he says, "Give me my houses, and give me an account of the discharge of your trust." Now'—Harry rose from the table on which he had been sitting—'let us have no more bounce : the game is up. I have in my pocket—here,' he tapped his coat pocket, 'the original deed itself. Do you want to know where it was found ? Behind a safe at the Brewery, where it was hidden by your brother-in-law, Bob Coppin, with all the country notes which got Josephus into a mess. As for the date, I will remind you that it was executed

about thirty-five years ago, when my mother was still a girl and unmarried, and you had recently married her sister. I have the deed here. What is more, it has been seen by the Chief Accountant at the Brewery, who gave it me. Bunker, the game is up.'

He moved towards the door.

'Have you anything to say before I go? I am now going straight to a lawyer.'

'What is the—the—the—lowest——Oh! good Lord!—the very lowest figure that you will take to square it? Oh! be merciful; I am a poor man, indeed a very poor man, though they think me warm. Yet I must scrape and save to get along at all.'

'Two thousand,' said Harry.

'Make it fifteen hundred. Oh! fifteen hundred to clear off all scores, and then you can go away out of the place; I could borrow fifteen hundred.'

'Two thousand,' Harry repeated. 'Of course, besides the houses, which are mine.'

'*Besides* the houses? Never. You may do your worst. You may drag your poor old uncle, now sixty years of age, before the

courts, but two thousand besides the houses? Never!’

He banged the floor with his stick, but his agitation was betrayed by the nervous tapping of the end upon the oilcloth which followed the first hasty bang.

‘No bounce, if you please.’ Harry took out his watch. ‘I will give you five minutes to decide; or, if your mind is already made up, I will go and ask advice of a lawyer at once.’

‘I cannot give you that sum of money,’ Bunker declared: ‘it is not that I would not; I would if I could. Business has been bad: sometimes I’ve spent more than I’ve made; and what little I’ve saved I meant always for you—I did indeed. I said, I will make it up to him. He shall have it back with——’

‘One minute gone,’ said Harry relentlessly.

‘Oh! this is dreadful. Why, to get even fifteen hundred I should have to sell all my little property at a loss; and what a dreadful thing it is to sell property at a loss! Give me more time to consider, only a week or so, just to look round.’

‘Three minutes left,’ said Harry the hardened.

‘Oh! oh! oh!’ He burst into tears and weeping of genuine grief, and shame, and rage. ‘Oh! that a nephew should be found to persecute his uncle in such a way! Where is your Christian charity? Where is forgiving and remitting?’

‘Only two minutes left,’ said Harry, unmoved.

Then Bunker fell upon his knees: he grovelled and implored pardon; he offered one house, two houses, and twelve hundred pounds, fifteen hundred pounds, eighteen hundred pounds.

‘One minute left,’ said Harry.

Then he sat down and wiped the tears from his eyes, and in good round terms—in Poplar, Limehouse, Shadwell, Wapping, and Ratcliff Highway terms—he cursed his nephew and the houses and the trust, and all that therein lay, because before the temptation came he was an honest man, whereas now he should never be able to look Stepney in the face again.

‘Time’s up,’ said Harry, putting on his hat.

In face of the inevitable, Mr. Bunker showed an immediate change of front. He neither prayed, nor wept, nor swore. He became once more the complete man of business. He left the stool of humiliation, and seated himself on his own Windsor chair before his own table. Here, pen in hand, he seemed as if he was dictating rather than accepting terms.

‘Don’t go, he said. ‘I accept.’

‘Very good,’ Harry replied. ‘You know what is best for yourself. As for me, I don’t want to make more fuss than is necessary. You know the terms?’

‘Two thousand down; the three houses; and a complete discharge in full of all claims. Those are the conditions.’

‘Yes, those are the conditions.’

‘I will draw up the discharge,’ said Mr. Bunker, ‘and then no one need be any the wiser.’

Harry laughed. This cool and business-like compromise of felony pleased him.

‘You may draw it up if you like. But my opinion of your ability is so great, that I shall have to show the document to a solicitor for his approval and admiration.’

Mr. Bunker was disconcerted. He had hoped—that is, thought—he saw his way ; but never mind. He quickly recovered, and said, with decision,—

‘Go to Lawyer Pike in the Mile End Road.’

‘Why? Is the Honourable Pike a friend of yours?’

‘No, he isn’t ; that is why I want you to go to him. Tell him that you and I have long been wishing to clear up these accounts, and that you’ve agreed to take the two thousand with the houses.’ Mr. Bunker seemed now chiefly anxious that the late deplorable scene should be at once forgotten and forgiven. ‘He said the other day that I was nothing better than a common grinder and oppressor. Now, when he sees what an honourable trustee I am, he will be sorry he said that. You can tell everybody if you like. Why, what is it? Here’s my nephew comes home to me and says, Give me my houses. I say, Prove your title. Didn’t I say so? How was I to know that he was my nephew? Then the gentleman comes who took him away, and says, He is your long-lost nephew ; and I say, Take your houses, young

man, with the accumulations of the rent hoarded up for you. Why, you can tell everybody that story.'

'I will leave you to tell it, Bunker, your own way. Everybody will believe that way of telling the story. What is more, I will not go out of my way to contradict it.'

'Very good, then. And on that understanding I withdraw all the harsh things I may have said to you, nephew. And we can be good friends again.'

'Certainly, if you like,' said Harry, and fairly ran away for fear of being called upon to make more concessions.

'It's a terrible blow!' The old man sat down and wiped his forehead. 'To think of two thousand down! But it might have been much worse. Ah! it might have been very, very much worse. I've done better than I expected, when he said he had the papers. The young man's a fool—a mere fool. The houses let for 150*l.* a year, and they have never been empty for six months together; and the outside repairs are a trifle, and I've saved it all every year. Ha! now a hundred and fifty

pounds a year for twenty years and more, at compound interest only five per cent., is close on 5,000*l.* I've calculated it out often enough to know. Yes, and I've made five per cent. on it, and sometimes six and seven, and more, with no losses. It might have been far, far worse. It's come to 7,000*l.* if it's a penny. And to get rid of that awful fear and that devil of a boy with his grins and his sneers at 2,000*l.*, why, it's cheap, I call it cheap. As for the houses, I'll get them back, see if I don't.'

CHAPTER XLIV.

A FOOL AND HIS MONEY.

MR. PIKE, the solicitor of the Mile End Road, does not belong to the story—which is a pity, because he has many enviable qualities—further than is connected with Harry's interview with him.

He read the documents and heard the story from beginning to end. When he had quite mastered all the details he began mildly to express astonishment and pity that any young man could be such a fool. This was hard, because Harry really thought he had done a mighty clever thing. 'You have been taken in, sir,' said Mr. Pike, 'in a most barefaced and impudent manner. Two thousand pounds! Why, the mere rent alone, without counting interest, is three thousand. Go away, sir; find out this fraudulent impostor, and tell him that

you will have nothing to do with him short of a full account and complete restitution.'

'I cannot do that,' said Harry.

'Why not?'

'Because I have passed my word.'

'I think, young man, you said you were a cabinet-maker — though you look something better.'

'Yes, I belong to that trade.'

'Since when, may I ask, have cabinet-makers been so punctilious as to their promises?'

'The fact is,' said Harry gravely, 'we have turned over a new leaf, and are now all on the side of truth and honour.'

'Humph! Then there is nothing to do but to give the man a receipt in full and a discharge. You are of age; you can do this if you like. Shall I draw it up for you, and receive the money, and take over the houses?'

This was settled, therefore, and in this way Harry became a rich man, with houses and money in the funds.

As for Bunker, he made the greatest mistake in his life when he sent his nephew to Mr.

Pike. He should have known, but he was like the ostrich when he runs his head into the sand, and believes from the secure retreat that he is invisible to his hunters. For his own version of the incident was palpably absurd; and, besides, Mr. Pike heard Harry's account of the matter. Therefore, though Bunker thought to heap coals of fire upon his enemy's head, he only succeeded in throwing them under his feet, which made him kick—'for who can go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned?' The good man is now, therefore, labouring under a cloud of prejudice which does not seem to lift, though perhaps he will live it down. Other events have happened since, which have operated to his prejudice. Everybody knows how he received his nephew; what wicked things he said everywhere about him; and what rumours he spread about Miss Kennedy: everybody knows that he had to disgorge houses—actually, houses—which he had appropriated. This knowledge is common property: and it is extremely unpleasant for Mr. Bunker when he takes his walks abroad to be cruelly assailed by questions which hit harder

than any brickbat : they are hurled at him by working men and by street boys. ‘Who stole the ’ouse?’ for instance, is a very nasty thing to be said to a gentleman who is professionally connected with house property. I know not how this knowledge came to be so generally known. Certainly Harry did not spread it abroad. People, however, are not fools, and can put things together : where the evil-doings and backslidings of their friends are concerned they are surprisingly sharp.

Now when the ownership of the house in Stepney Green became generally known, there immediately sprang up, as always happens on occasions of discovery, rooting out of facts, or exposure of wickedness, quite a large crop of old inhabitants ready to declare that they knew all along that the house on Stepney Green was one of those belonging to old Mr. Coppin. He bought it, they said, of Mr. Messenger, who was born there ; and it was one of three left to Caroline, who died young. Who would believe that Mr. Bunker could have been so wicked? Where is faith in brother man since so eminent a professor of honesty has fallen?

Mr. Bunker suffers, but he suffers in silence ; he may be seen any day in the neighbourhood of Stepney Green, still engaged in his usual business : people may talk behind his back, but talk breaks no bones : they don't dare talk before his face : though he has lost two thousand pounds, there is still money left—he feels that he is a warm man, and has money to leave behind him : it will be said of him that he cut up well. Warmth of all kinds comforts a man ; but he confesses with a pang that he did wrong to send his nephew to that lawyer, who took the opportunity, when he drew up the discharge and receipt, of giving him an opinion—unasked and unpaid for—as to his conduct in connection with the trust. There could be no mistake at all about the meaning and force of that opinion. And, oddly enough, whenever Mr. Bunker sees the Queen's omnibus—that dark painted vehicle, driven by a policeman—pass along the road, he thinks of Mr. Pike, and that opinion returns to his memory, and he feels just exactly as if a bucket of cold water was trickling down his back by the nape of the neck. Even in warm weather this is disagree-

able. And it shows that the lawyer must have spoken very strong words indeed, and that although Mr. Bunker, like the simple ones and the scorers, wished for none of the lawyers' counsel, unlike them he did not despise their reproof. Yet he is happier, now that the blow has fallen, than he was while he was awaiting it and dreaming of handcuffs.

We anticipate: but we have, indeed, seen almost the last of Mr. Bunker. It is sad to part with him. But we have no choice.

In the evening Harry went as usual to the drawing-room. He stayed, however, after the girls went away. There was nothing unusual in his doing so. 'Girls in my position,' said the dressmaker, 'are not tied by the ordinary rules.' To-night, however, he had something to say.

'Congratulate me,' he cried as soon as they were alone. 'I have turned out, as the story-books say, to be the heir to vast sums of money.'

Angela turned pale. She was reassured, however, on learning the extent of the heritage.

'Consider my romantic story,' said Harry.

‘Instead of finding myself the long-lost heir, strawberry-mark and all, to an earldom, I am the son of a Sergeant in the Line. And then, just as I am getting over the blow, I find myself the owner of three houses and two thousand pounds. What workman ever got two thousand pounds before? There was an under-gardener I knew,’ he went on meditatively, ‘who once got a hundred : he called it a round hundred, I remember. He and his wife went on the Hospitable Drink for a fortnight : then they went to hospital for a month with Trimmings : and then went back to work—the money all gone—and joined the Primitive Methodists. Can’t we do something superior in the shape of a Burst, or a Boom, for the girls, with two thousand pounds?’

‘Tell me,’ said Angela, ‘how you got it.’

He narrated the whole story, for her instruction and amusement, with some dramatic force impersonating Bunker’s wrath, terror, and entreaties, and final business-like collapse.

‘So that,’ said Angela, ‘you are now a man of property, and will, I suppose, give up the work at the Brewery.’

‘Do you think I should?’

‘I do not like to see any man idle, and—’ she hesitated—‘especially you.’

‘Thank you,’ said Harry. ‘Then I remain. The question of the two thousand pounds—my cool Two Thousand—I am the winner of the Two Thousand—in reserve. As for this house, however, decided steps must be taken. Listen, Queen of the Mystery of Dress! You pay Bunker sixty-five pounds a year or so for the rent of this house; that is a good large deduction from the profits of the Association. I have been thinking, if you approve, that I will have this house conveyed to you in trust for the Association. Then you will be rent-free.’

‘But that is a very, very generous offer. You really wish to give us this house altogether for ourselves?’

‘If you will accept it.’

‘You have only these houses, and you give us the best of them. Is it right and just to strip yourself?’

‘How many houses should I have? Now there are two left, and their rent brings in seventy pounds a year, and I have two thousand

pounds which will bring in another eighty pounds a year. I am rich—much too rich for a common cabinet-maker.’

‘Oh!’ she said, ‘what can we do but accept? And how shall we show our gratitude? But, indeed, we can do nothing.’

‘I want nothing,’ said Harry. ‘I have had so much happiness in this place that I can want for nothing. It is for me to show my gratitude.’

‘Thank you,’ she replied, giving him her hand. He stooped and kissed it, but humbly, as one who accepts a small favour gratefully and asks for no more.

They were alone in the drawing-room; the fire was low; only one lamp was burning; Angela was sitting beside the fire; her face was turned from him. A mighty wave of love was mounting in the young man’s brain; but a little more, a very little more, and he would have been kneeling at her feet. She felt the danger: she felt it the more readily because she was so deeply moved herself. What had she given the girls, out of her abundance, compared with what he had given, out of his slender portion?

Her eyes filled with tears. Then she sprang to her feet and touched his hand again.

‘Do not forget your promise,’ she said.

‘My promise? Oh! how long——’

‘Patience,’ she replied. ‘Give me a little while—a little while—only—and——’

‘Forgive me,’ he said, kissing her hand again. ‘Forgive me.’

‘Let me go,’ she went on. ‘It is eleven o’clock.’ They put out the lamp and went out. The night was clear and bright.

‘Do not go in just yet,’ said Harry. ‘It is pleasant out here, and I think the stars are brighter than they are at the West End.’

‘Everything is better here,’ said Angela, ‘than at the West End. Here we have hearts, and can feel for each other. Here we are all alike—workmen and workwomen together.’

‘You are a prejudiced person. Let us talk of the Palace of Delight—your dream.’

‘Your invention,’ said Angela.

‘Won’t my two thousand go some way to starting it? Perhaps, if we could just start it, the thing would go on of its own accord. Why, see what you have done with your girls already.’

‘But I must have a big Palace—a noble building, furnished with everything that we want. No, my friend, we will take your house because it is a great and noble gift, but you shall not sacrifice your money. Yet we will have that Palace, and before long. And when it is ready——’

‘Yes, when it is ready.’

‘Perhaps the opening of the Palace will be, for all of us, the beginning of a new happiness.’

‘You speak in a parable.’

‘No,’ she said, ‘I speak in sober earnestness. Now let me go. Remember what I say: the opening of the Palace may be, if you will—for all of us——’

‘For you and me?’

‘For—yes—for you—and for me. Good night.’

CHAPTER XLV.

LADY DAVENANT'S DINNER PARTY.

LADY DAVENANT had now been in full enjoyment of her title in Portman Square, where one enjoys such things more thoroughly than on Stepney Green, for four or five weeks. She at first enjoyed it so much that she thought of nothing but the mere pleasure of the greatness. She felt an uplifting of heart every time she walked up and down the stately stairs; another every time she sat at the well-furnished dinner-table; and another whenever she looked about her in the drawing-room. She wrote copious letters to her friend Aurelia Tucker during these days. She explained with fulness of detail, and in terms calculated to make that lady expire of envy, the splendour of her position; and, for at least five weeks, she felt as if the hospitality of Miss Messenger actually brought with it a complete recognition of the

claim. Her husband, not so sanguine as herself, knew very well that the time would come when the Case would have to be taken up again and sent in to the proper quarter for examination. Meantime he was resigned, and even happy. Three square meals a day, each of them abundant, each a masterpiece of art, were enough to satisfy that remarkable twist which, as her ladyship was persuaded, one knows not on what grounds, had always been a distinguishing mark of the Davenants. Familiarity speedily reconciled him to the presence of the footmen; he found in the library a most delightful chair in which he could sleep all the morning; and it pleased him to be driven through the streets in a luxurious carriage under soft warm furs, in which one can take the air and get a splendid appetite without fatigue.

They were seen about a great deal. It was a part of Angela's design that they should, when the time came for going back again, seem to themselves to have formed a part of the best society in London. Therefore she gave instructions to her maid that her visitors were to go to all the public places, the theatres, concerts, exhibitions, and places of amusement.

The little American lady knew so little what she ought to see and whither she ought to go, that she fell back on Campion for advice and help. It was Campion who suggested a theatre in the evening, the Exhibition of Old Masters or the Grosvenor Gallery in the morning, and Regent Street in the afternoon ; it was Campion who pointed out the recognised superiority of Westminster Abbey, considered as a place of worship for a lady of exalted rank, over a chapel up a back street, of the Baptist persuasion, to which at her own home Lady Davenant had belonged. It was Campion who went with her and showed her the shops, and taught her the delightful art of spending her money—the money ‘lent’ her by Miss Messenger—in the manner becoming to a peeress. She was so clever and sharp, that she caught at every hint dropped by the lady’s-maid ; she reformed her husband’s ideas of evening dress ; she humoured his weaknesses ; she let him keep his eyes wide open at a farce or a ballet on the understanding that at a concert or a sermon he might blamelessly sleep through it : she even began to acquire rudimentary ideas on the principles of Art.

‘I confess, my dear Aurelia,’ she wrote, ‘that habit soon renders even these marble halls familiar. I have become perfectly reconciled to the splendour of English patrician life, and now feel as if I had been born to it. Tall footmen no longer frighten me, nor the shouting of one’s name after the theatre. Of course, the outward marks of respect one receives as one’s due, when one belongs, by the gift of Providence, to a great and noble house.’

This was all very pleasant; yet Lady Davenant began to yearn for somebody, if it was only Mrs. Bormalack, with whom she could converse. She wanted a long chat. Perhaps Miss Kennedy or Mrs. Bormalack, or the sprightly Mr. Goslett, might be induced to come and spend a morning with her, or a whole day, if only they would not feel shy and frightened in so splendid a place.

Meantime some one ‘connected with the Press’ got to hear of a *soi-disant* Lord Davenant who was often to be seen with his wife in boxes at theatres and other places of resort. He heard, this intellectual connection

of the Press, people asking each other who Lord Davenant was ; he inquired of the Red Book, and received no response ; he thereupon perceived that here was an opportunity for a sensation and a mystery. He found out where Lord Davenant was living, by great good luck—it was through taking a single four of whisky in a bar frequented by gentlemen in plush ; and he proceeded to call upon his lordship and to interview him.

The result appeared in a long *communiqué* which attracted general and immediate interest. The journalist set forth at length and in the most graphic manner the strange and romantic career of the Condescending Wheelwright ; he showed how the discovery was made, and how, after many years, the illustrious pair had crossed the Atlantic to put forward their claim ; and how they were offered the noble hospitality of a young lady of princely fortune. It was a most delightful godsend to the paper in which it appeared, and it came at a time when the House was not sitting, and there was no wrangle-wrangle of debates to furnish material for the columns of big type which are supposed

to sway the masses. The other papers therefore seized upon the topic and had leading articles upon it, in which the false Demetrius, the pretending Palæologus, Perkin Warbeck, Lambert Simmel, George Psalmanazar, the Languishing Nobleman, the Earl of Mar, the Count of Albany, with other claims and claimants, furnished illustrations to the claims of the Davenants. The publicity given to the Case by these articles delighted her ladyship beyond everything, while it abashed and confounded her lord. He saw in it the beginning of more exertion, and strenuous efforts after the final recognition. And she carefully cut out all the articles and sent them to her nephew Nicholas, to her friend Aurelia Tucker, and to the editor of the *Canaan City Express* with her compliments. And she felt all the more, in the midst of this excitement, that if she did not have some one to talk to she must go back to Stepney Green and spend a day. Or she would die.

It was at this juncture that Campion, perhaps inspired by secret instructions, suggested that her ladyship must be feeling a

little lonely, and must want to see her friends. Why not, she said, ask them to dinner?

A dinner party, Lady Davenant reflected, would serve not only to show her old friends the reality of her position, but would also please them as a mark of kindly remembrance. Only, she reflected, dinner at Stepney Green had not the same meaning that it possesses at the West End. The best dinner, in that locality, is that which is most plentiful, and there are no attempts made to decorate a table. Another thing, dinner is taken universally between one o'clock and two. 'I think, Clara Martha,' said his lordship, whom she consulted on this affair of state, 'that at any time of day such a Feast of Belteshazzar as you will give them will be grateful; and they may call it dinner or supper, whichever they please.'

Thereupon Lady Davenant wrote a letter to Mrs. Bormalack inviting the whole party. She explained that they had met with the most splendid hospitality from Miss Messenger, in whose house they were still staying; that they had become public characters, and had been the subject of discussion in the papers, which

caused them to be much stared at and followed in the streets, and in theatres and concert rooms; that they were both convinced that their Case would soon be triumphant; that they frequently talked over old friends of Stepney, and regretted that the distance between them was so great—though distance, she added kindly, cannot divide hearts; and that, if Mrs. Bormalack's party would come over together and dine with them, it would be taken as a great kindness, both by herself and by his lordship. She added that she hoped they would all come, including Mr. Fagg and old Mr. Maliphant, and Mr. Josephus, 'though,' she added with a little natural touch, 'I doubt whether Mr. Maliphant ever gave me a thought; and Mr. Josephus was always too much occupied with his own misfortunes to mind any business of mine. And, dear Mrs. Bormalack, please remember that when we speak of dinner we mean what you call supper. It is exactly the same thing, only served a little earlier. We take ours at eight o'clock instead of nine. His lordship desires me to add that he shall be extremely disappointed if Mr.

Goslett does not come; and you will tell Miss Kennedy, whose kindness I can never forget, the same from me, and that she must bring Nelly and Rebekah and Captain Sorensen.'

The letter was received with great admiration. Josephus, who had blossomed into a completely new suit of clothes of juvenile cut, declared that the invitation did her ladyship great credit, and that now his misfortunes were finished he should be rejoiced to take his place in society. Harry laughed, and said that of course he would go. 'And you, Miss Kennedy?'

Angela coloured. Then she said that she would try to go.

'And if Mr. Maliphant and Daniel only go too,' said Harry, 'we shall be as delightful a party as were ever gathered together at one dinner-table.'

It happened that about this time Lord Jocelyn remembered the American claimants, and his promise to call upon them. He therefore called, and was received with the greatest cordiality by her little ladyship, and with won-

drous affability, as becomes one man of rank towards another, by Lord Davenant.

It was her ladyship who volubly explained their claim to him, and the certainty of the assumption that their Timothy Clitheroe was the lost heir of the same two Christian names : her husband only folded his fat hands over each other, and from time to time wagged his head.

‘You are the first of my husband’s brother peers,’ she said, ‘who has called upon us. We shall not forget this kindness from your lordship.’

‘But I am not a peer at all,’ he explained ; ‘I am only a younger son with a courtesy title. I am quite a small personage.’

‘Which makes it all the kinder,’ said her ladyship ; ‘and I must say that, grand as it is in this big house, one does get tired of hearin’ no voice but your own—and my husband spends a good deal of his time in the study. Oh ! a man of great literary attainments, and a splendid mathematician. I assure your lordship not a man or a boy in Canaan City can come near him in algebra.’

‘Up to a certain point, Clara Martha,’ said her husband, meaning that there might be lofty heights in science to which even he himself could not soar. ‘Quadratic equations, my lord.’

Lord Jocelyn made an original remark about the importance of scientific pursuits.

‘And since you are so friendly,’ continued her ladyship, ‘I will venture to invite your lordship to dine with us.’

‘Certainly. I shall be greatly pleased.’

‘We have got a few friends coming to-morrow evening,’ said her ladyship, rather grandly. ‘Friends from Whitechapel.’

Lord Jocelyn looked curious.

‘Yes, Mr. Josephus Coppin and his cousin Mr. Goslett, a sprightly young man who respects rank.’

‘He is coming, is he?’ asked Lord Jocelyn, laughing.

‘And then there is Miss Kennedy——’

‘She is coming too?’ He rose with alacrity. ‘Lady Davenant, I shall be most happy to come, I assure you.’

It was most unfortunate that next day Miss Kennedy had such a dreadful headache,

that she found herself prevented from going with the rest. This was a great disappointment, and at the last moment old Mr. Maliphant could not be found, and they had to start without him.

How they performed the journey, how Harry managed to let most of the party go on before, because of his foolish pride, which would not let him form one of a flock all going out together, and how he with Captain Sorensen and Nelly came on after the rest, may be passed over.

When he got to Portman Square, he found the first detachment already arrived, and, to his boundless astonishment, his guardian. Lady Davenant, arrayed in her black velvet and the jewels which Angela gave her, looked truly magnificent. Was it possible, Mrs. Bormalack thought, that such a transformation could be effected in a woman by a velvet gown? She even looked tall. She received her friends with unaffected kindness, and introduced them all to Lord Jocelyn.

‘Mrs. Bormalack, your lordship, my former landlady, and always my very good friend.

Professor Climo, your lordship, the famous conjurer. And I'm sure the way he makes things disappear makes you believe in magic. Mr. Fagg, the great scholar; of whom, perhaps, your lordship has heard. Mr. Josephus Coppin, who has been unfortunate.' Lord Jocelyn wondered what that meant. 'Miss Rebekah Hermitage, whose father is minister of the Seventh Day Independents, and a most respectable Connection, though small in number. Captain Sorensen, your lordship, who comes from the 'Trinity almshouse, and Nelly his daughter: and Mr. Goslett. And I think that is all; and the sooner they let us have dinner the better.'

Lord Jocelyn shook hands with everybody. When it came to Harry, he laughed, and they both laughed, but they did not say why.

'And where is Miss Kennedy?' asked her ladyship. And there were great lamentations. 'I wanted your lordship to see Miss Kennedy. Oh, there's nobody like Miss Kennedy, is there, Nelly?'

'Nobody,' said Nelly. 'There can be nobody like Miss Kennedy.' Lord Jocelyn

was struck with the beauty of this girl, whom he remembered seeing at the Dressmakery. He began to hope that she would sit next to him at dinner.

‘Nobody half so beautiful in all Stepney, is there?’

‘Nobody half so good,’ said Rebekah.

Then the dinner was announced, and there was confusion in going down, because nobody would go before Lord Jocelyn, who, therefore, had to lead the way. Lord Davenant offered his arm to Mrs. Bormalack, Harry to Nelly, and Captain Sorensen to Rebekah. The Professor, Mr. Fagg, and Josephus came last.

‘To be sure,’ said Mrs. Bormalack, looking about her, thankful that she had put on her best cap, ‘magnificence was expected, as was your lordship’s due, but such as this—no, young man, I never take soup unless I’ve made it myself, and am quite sure—such as this, my lord, we did not expect.’

She was splendid in her beautiful best cap, all ribbons and bows, with an artificial dahlia in it of a far-off fashion—say, the Forties; the sight of the table, with its plate and flowers

and fruit, filled her with admiration, but, as she now says in recalling that stupendous feed, there was too much ornament, which kept her mind off the cooking, so that she really carried away no new ideas for Stepney use. Nelly did sit next to Lord Jocelyn, who talked with her, and found that she was shy until he touched upon Miss Kennedy. Then she waxed eloquent, and told him marvels, forgetting that he was a stranger who probably knew and cared nothing about Miss Kennedy. But Nelly belonged to that very numerous class which believes its own affairs of the highest interest to the world at large, and in this instance Miss Kennedy was a subject of the deepest interest to her neighbours. Wherefore he listened while she told what had been done for the workgirls by one woman, one of themselves.

Opposite, on Lady Davenant's left, sat Captain Sorensen. In the old days the captains of East Indiamen were not unacquainted with great men's tables, but it was long since he had sat at such a feast. Presently Lord Jocelyn began to look at him curiously.

‘Who is the old gentleman opposite?’ he whispered to Nelly.

‘That is my father ; he was a Captain once, and commanded a great ship.’

‘I thought so,’ said Lord Jocelyn. ‘I remember him, but he has forgotten me.’

Next to the Captain sat Rebekah, looking prepared for any fate, and not unduly uplifted by the splendour of the scene. But for her, as well as for nearly all who were present, the word dinner will henceforth have a new and exalted meaning. The length of the feast, the number of things offered, the appointments of the table, struck her imagination ; she thought of Belshazzar and of Herod ; such as the feast before her were those feasts of old : she tasted the champagne, and it took away her breath ; yet it seemed good. Mr. Goslett seemed to think so too, because he drank so many glasses.

So did the others, and, being unexperienced in wine, they drank with more valour than discretion, so that they began to talk loud ; but that was not till later.

‘Do people—rich people—always dine like this?’ asked Nelly of her neighbour.

‘Something like this ; yes ; that is, some such dinner, though simpler, is always prepared for them.’

‘I was thinking,’ she said, ‘how differently people live. I would rather live in our way—with Miss Kennedy—than in so much grandeur.’

‘Grandeur soon becomes a matter of habit. But as for Miss Kennedy, you cannot live always with her, can you?’

‘Why not?’

‘Well, she may marry, you know.’

Nelly looked across the table at Harry.

‘I suppose she will ; we all of us hope she will, if it is to stay with us ; but that need not take her away from us.’

‘Do you know Miss Messenger?’

‘No,’ said Nelly ; ‘she has been very kind to us ; she is our best customer ; she sends us all sorts of kind messages, and presents even ; and she sends us her love and best wishes ; I think she must be very fond of Miss Kennedy. She promises to come some day and visit us. Whenever I think of Miss Messenger, I think, somehow, that she must be like Miss Kennedy ;

only I cannot understand Miss Kennedy being rich and the owner of this great house.'

When the ladies retired, at length, it became manifest that Josephus had taken more wine than was good for him. He laughed loudly; he told everybody that he was going to begin all over again, classes and lectures and everything, including the Sunday school and the church membership. The Professor, who, for his part, seemed indisposed for conversation, retained the mastery over his fingers, and began to prepare little tricks, and presently conveyed oranges into Lord Davenant's coat tails without moving from his chair. And Daniel Fagg, whose cheek was flushed, and whose eyes were sparkling, rose from his chair and attacked Lord Jocelyn, note-book in hand.

'Is your lo'ship,' he began, with a perceptible thickness of speech—Lord Jocelyn recognised him as the man whom he had assisted at Stepney Green, and who subsequently took dinner with the girls—'is your lo'ship int'rested in Hebrew schriptions?'

'Very much indeed,' said Lord Jocelyn, politely.

‘Low me to put your lo’ship’s name down for schription, twelve-and-six? Book will come out next month, Miss Ken’dy says so.’

‘Put up your book, Daniel,’ said Harry sternly, ‘and sit down.’

‘I want—show—his lo’ship—a Hebrew schription.’

He sat down, however, obediently, and immediately fell fast asleep.

Said Lord Jocelyn to Captain Sorensen,—

‘I remember you, Captain, very well indeed, but you have forgotten me. Were you not in command of the “Sussex” in the year of the Mutiny? Did you not take me out with the 120th?’

‘To be sure—to be sure I did; and I remember your lordship very well, and am very glad to find you remember me. You were younger then.’

‘I was; and how goes it with you now, Captain? Cheerfully as of old?’

‘Ay, ay, my lord. I’m in the Trinity Almshouse, and my daughter is with Miss Kennedy, bless her! Therefore I’ve nothing to complain of.’

‘May I call upon you, some day, to talk over old times? You used to sing a good song in those days, and play a good tune, and dance a good dance.’

‘Come, my lord, as often as you like,’ he replied in great good humour. ‘The cabin is small, but it’s cosy, and the place is hard to get at.’

‘It is the queerest dinner I ever had, Harry,’ Lord Jocelyn whispered. ‘I like your old Captain and his daughter. Is the hard-hearted dressmaker prettier than Nelly?’

‘Prettier! why, there is no comparison possible.’

‘Yet Nelly hath a pleasing manner.’

‘Miss Kennedy turns all her girls into ladies. Come and see her.’

‘Perhaps, Harry, perhaps; when she is no longer hard-hearted; when she has named the happy day.’

‘This evening,’ said Lady Davenant, when they joined her, ‘will be one that I never can forget. For I’ve had my old friends round me, who were kind in our poverty and neglect; and now I’ve your lordship too, who belongs to

the new time. So that it is a joining together, as it were, and one don't feel like stepping out of our place into another quite different, as I shall tell Aurelia, who says she is afraid that splendour may make me forget old friends; whereas there is nobody I should like to have with us this moment better than Aurelia. But perhaps she judges others by herself.'

'Lor!' cried Mrs. Bormalack, 'to hear your ladyship go on! It's like an angel of goodness.'

'And the only thing that vexes me—it's enough to spoil it all—is that Miss Kennedy couldn't come. Ah! my lord, if you had only seen Miss Kennedy! Rebekah and Nelly are two good girls and pretty, but you are not to compare with Miss Kennedy—are you, dears?'

They both shook their heads and were not offended.

It was past eleven when they left to go home in cabs: one contained the sleeping forms of Josephus and Mr. Fagg; the next contained Captain Sorensen and Nelly, with Harry. The Professor, who had partly re-

vived, came with Mrs. Bormalack, and Rebekah in the last.

‘You seemed to know Lord Jocelyn, Mr. Goslett,’ said the Captain.

‘I ought to,’ replied Harry simply; ‘he gave me my education.’

‘He was always a brave and generous officer, I remember,’ the Captain went on. ‘Yes, I remember him well; all the men would have followed him everywhere. Well, he says he will come and see me.’

‘Then he will come,’ said Harry, ‘if he said so.’

‘Very good; if he comes, he shall see Miss Kennedy too.’

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE END OF THE CASE.

THIS dinner, to which her ladyship will always look back with the liveliest satisfaction, was the climax, the highest point, so to speak, of her greatness, which was destined to have a speedy fall. Angela asked Lord Jocelyn to read through the papers and advise. She told him of the Professor's discovery, and of the book which had belonged to the wheelwright, and everything.

Of course, the opinion which he formed was exactly that formed by Angela herself, and he told her so.

‘I have asked them to my house,’ Angela wrote, ‘because I want them to go home to their own people with pleasant recollections of their stay in London. I should like them to feel, not that their claim had broken down,

and that they were defeated, but that it had been examined, and was held to be not proven. I should be very sorry if I thought that the little lady would cease to believe in her husband's illustrious descent. Will you help me to make her keep her faith as far as possible, and go home with as little disappointment as possible?'

'I will try,' said Lord Jocelyn.

He wrote to Lady Davenant that he had given careful consideration to the Case, and had taken opinions, which was also true, because he made a lawyer, a herald, and a peer all read the documents, and write him a letter on the subject. He dictated all three letters, it is true; but there is generally something to conceal in this world of compromises.

He went solemnly to Portman Square bearing these precious documents with him. To Lady Davenant his opinion was the most important step which had yet occurred in the history of the claim: she placed her husband in the hardest arm-chair that she could find, with strict injunctions to keep broad awake; and she had a great array of pens and paper laid

out on the table in order to look business-like. It must be owned that the good feeding of the last two months, with carriage exercise, had greatly increased his lordship's tendency to sleep and inaction. As for the Case, he had almost ceased to think of it. The Case meant worry, copying out, writing and re-writing, hunting up facts, and remembering: when the Case was put away he could give up his mind to breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Never had the present moment seemed so delightful to him.

Lord Jocelyn wore an expression of great gravity, as befitted the occasion. In fact, he was entrusted with an exceedingly delicate mission: he had to tell these worthy people that there was not the slightest hope for them: to recommend them to go home again; and though the counsel would be clothed in sugared words, to renounce for ever the hope of proving their imaginary claim. But it is better to be told these things kindly and sympathetically, by a man with a title, than by any coarse or common lawyer.

‘Before I begin’—Lord Jocelyn addressed himself to the lady instead of her husband—‘I

would ask if you have any relic at all of that first Timothy Clitheroe who is buried in your cemetery at Canaan City?’

‘There is a book,’ said her ladyship. ‘Here it is.’

She handed him a little book of songs, roughly bound in leather; on the title-page was written at the top ‘Saturday,’ and at the bottom ‘Davvenant.’

Lord Jocelyn laid the book down and opened his case.

First, he reminded them that Miss Messenger in her first letter had spoken of a possible moral, rather than legal, triumph; of a possible failure to establish the claim before a committee of the House of Peers to whom it would be referred. This, in his opinion, was the actual difficulty: he had read the Case as it had been carefully drawn up and presented by his lordship—and he complimented the writer upon his lucid and excellent style of drawing up of facts—and he had submitted the Case for the opinion of friends of his own, all of them gentlemen eminently proper to form and to express an opinion on such a subject. He

held the opinions of these gentlemen in his hands. One of them was from Lord de Lusignan, a nobleman of very ancient descent. His lordship wrote that there were very strong grounds for supposing it right to investigate a case which presented, certainly, very remarkable coincidences, if nothing more : that further investigations ought to be made on the spot ; and that, if this Timothy Clitheroe Davenant turned out to be the lost heir, it would be another romance in the history of the Peerage. And his lordship concluded by a kind expression of hope that more facts would be discovered in support of the claim.

‘You will like to keep this letter,’ said the reader, giving it to Lady Davenant. She was horribly pale and trembled, because it seemed as if everything was slipping from her.

‘The other letters,’ Lord Jocelyn went on, ‘are to the same effect. One is from a lawyer of great eminence, and the other is from a herald. You will probably like to keep them too, when I have read them.’

Lady Davenant took the letters, which were

cruel in their kindness, and the tears came into her eyes.

Lord Jocelyn went on to say that researches made in their interest in the parish registers had resulted in a discovery which might even be made into an argument against the claim. There was a foundling child baptised in the church in the same year as the young heir; he received the name of the village with the day of the week on which he was found for Christian name; that is to say, he was called Saturday Davenant.

Then, indeed, his lordship became very red, and her ladyship turned still paler and both looked guilty. Saturday Davenant! the words in the book. Suppose they were not a date and a name, but a man's whole name instead!

‘He left the parish,’ said Lord Jocelyn, ‘and was reported to have gone to America.’

Neither of them spoke. His lordship looked slowly around the room, as if expecting that everything, even the solid mahogany of the library shelves, would vanish suddenly away. And he groaned, thinking of the

dinners which would soon be things of the golden past.

‘But, my friends,’ Lord Jocelyn went on, ‘do not be downcast. There is always the possibility of new facts turning up. Your grandfather’s name may have been really Timothy Clitheroe, in which case I have very little doubt that he was the missing heir; but he may, on the other hand, have been the Saturday Davenant, in which case he lived and died with a lie on his lips, which one would be sorry to think possible.’

‘Well, sir—if that is so—what do you advise that we should do now?’ asked the grandson of this mystery. He seemed to have become an American citizen again, and to have shaken off the aristocratic manner.

‘What I should advise is this. You will never, most certainly, never get recognition of your claim without stronger evidence than you at present offer. On the other hand, no one will refuse to admit that you have a strong case. Therefore I would advise you to go home to your own people, to tell them what has happened—how your case was taken up and care-

fully considered by competent authorities'—here he named again the lawyer, the herald, and the peer—'to show them their opinions, and to say that you have come back for further evidence, if you can find any, which will connect you beyond a doubt with the lost heir.

'That is good advice, sir,' said the claimant. 'No, Clara Martha, for once I will have my own way. The connection is the weak point; we must go home and make it a strong point, else we had better stay there. I said, all along, that we ought not to have come. Nevertheless, I'm glad we came, Clara Martha. I sha'n't throw it in your teeth that we did come. I'm grateful to you for making us come. We've made good friends here, and seen many things which we shouldn't otherwise have seen. And the thought of this house and the meals we've had in it—such breakfasts, such luncheons, such dinners—will never leave us, I am sure.'

Lady Davenant could say nothing. She saw everything torn from her at a rough blow—her title, her consideration, the envy of her fellow-citizens, especially of Aurelia Tucker.

She put her handkerchief to her eyes and sobbed aloud.

‘You should not go back as if you were defeated,’ Lord Jocelyn went on in sympathy with the poor little woman. ‘You are as much entitled to the rank you claim as ever. More: your Case has been talked about; it is known: should any of the antiquaries who are always grubbing about parish records find any scrap of information which may help, he will make a note of it for you. When you came you were friendless and unknown. Now the press of England has taken you up: your story is romantic: we are all interested in you, and desirous of seeing you succeed. Before you go you will write to the papers stating why you go, and what you hope to find. All these letters and papers and proofs of the importance of your claim should be kept and shown to your friends.’

‘We feel mean about going back, and that’s a fact,’ said his lordship. ‘Still, if we must go back, why, we’d better go back with drums and trumpets than sneak back——’

‘Ah!’ said his wife, ‘if you’d only shown that spirit from the beginning, Timothy!’

He collapsed.

‘If we go back,’ she continued thoughtfully, ‘I suppose there’s some sort of work we can find, between us. Old folks hadn’t ought to work like the young, and I’m sixty-five, and so is my husband. But——’

She stopped, with a sigh.

‘I am empowered by Miss Messenger,’ Lord Jocelyn went on, with great softness of manner, ‘to make you a little proposition. She thinks that it would be most desirable for you to have your hands free while you make those researches which may lead to the discoveries we hope for. Now, if you have to waste the day in work you will never be able to make any research. Therefore Miss Messenger proposes—if you do not mind—if you will accept—an annuity on your joint lives of six hundred dollars. You may be thus relieved of all anxiety about your personal wants. And Miss Messenger begs only that you may let this annuity appear the offering of sympathising English friends.’

‘But we don’t know Miss Messenger,’ said her ladyship.

‘Has she not extended her hospitality to

you for two months and more? Is not that a proof of the interest she takes in you?’

‘Certainly it is. Why—see now—we’ve been living here so long, that we’ve forgotten it is all Miss Messenger’s gift.’

‘Then, you will accept?’

‘Oh, Lord Jocelyn, what can we do but accept?’

‘And with grateful hearts,’ added his lordship. ‘Tell her that. With grateful hearts They’ve a way of serving quail in her house, that——’ He stopped and sighed.

They have returned to Canaan City; they live in simple sufficiency. His lordship, when he is awake, has many tales to tell of London. His friends believe Stepney Green to be a part of May-fair, and Mrs. Bormalack to be a distinguished though untitled ornament of London society; while as for Aurelia Tucker, who fain would scoff, there are her ladyship’s beautiful and costly dresses, and her jewels, and the letters from Lord Jocelyn Le Breton and the rich Miss Messenger, and the six hundred dollars a year drawn monthly, which pro-

claim aloud that there is something in the claim.

These are things which cannot be gain-said.

Nevertheless, no new discoveries have yet rewarded his lordship's researches.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE PALACE OF DELIGHT.

DURING this time the Palace of Delight was steadily rising. Before Christmas its walls were completed and the roof on. Then began the painting, the decorating, and the fittings. And Angela was told that the building would be handed over to her, complete according to the contract, by the first of March.

The building was hidden away, so to speak, in a corner of vast Stepney, but already rumours were abroad concerning it, and the purpose for which it was erected. They were conflicting rumours. No one knew at all what was intended by it; no one had been within the walls; no one knew who built it. The place was situated so decidedly in the very heart and core of Stepney, that the outside public knew nothing at all about it, and the rumours were

confined to the small folk round it. So it rose in their midst without being greatly regarded. No report or mention of it came to Harry's ears, so that he knew nothing of it, and suspected nothing, any more than he suspected Miss Kennedy of being some other person.

The first of March in this present year of grace 1882 fell upon a Wednesday. Angela resolved that the opening day should be on Thursday, the second, and that she would open it herself: and then another thought came into her mind: and the longer she meditated upon it, the stronger hold did the idea take upon her.

The Palace of Delight was not, she said, her own conception: it was that of the man—the man she loved. Would it not be generous, in giving this place over to the people for whom it was built, to give its real founder the one reward which he asked?

Never any knight of old had been more loyal: he obeyed in the spirit as well as the letter her injunction not to speak of love: not only did he refrain from those good words which he would fain have uttered, but he showed no impatience, grumbled not, had no

fits of sulking : he waited, patient. And in all other things he did her behest, working with a cheerful heart for her girls, always ready to amuse them, always at her service for things great and small, and meeting her mood with a ready sympathy.

One evening, exactly a fortnight before the proposed opening day, Angela invited all the girls and, with them, her faithful old Captain, and her servant Harry, to follow her because she had a Thing to show them. She spoke with great seriousness, and looked overcome with the gravity of this Thing. What was she going to show them ?

They followed, wondering, while she led the way to the church, and then turned to the right among the narrow lanes of a part where, by some accident, none of the girls belonged.

Presently she stopped before a great building. It was not lit up, and seemed quite dark and empty. Outside, the planks were not yet removed, and they were covered with gaudy advertisements, but it was too dark to see them. There was a broad porch above the entrance, with a generously ample ascent of steps like

unto those of St. Paul's Cathedral. Angela rang a bell and the door was opened. They found themselves in an entrance hall of some kind, imperfectly lighted by a single gas jet. There were three or four men standing about, apparently waiting for them, because one stepped forward, and said,—

‘Miss Messenger’s party?’

‘We are Miss Messenger’s party,’ Angela replied.

‘Whoever we are,’ said Harry, ‘we are a great mystery to ourselves.’

‘Patience,’ Angela whispered. ‘Part of the mystery is going to be cleared up.’

‘Light up, Bill,’ said one of the men.

Then the whole place passed suddenly into daylight, for it was lit by the electric globes.

It was a lofty vestibule. On either side were cloak-rooms: opposite were entrance doors. But what was on the other side of these entrance-rooms none of them could guess.

‘My friend,’ said Angela to Harry, ‘this place should be yours. It is of your creation.’

‘What is it, then?’

‘It is your Palace of Delight. Yes: nothing

short of that. Will you lead me into your Palace?’

She took his arm while he marvelled greatly, and asked himself what this might mean. One of the men then opened the doors, and they entered, followed by the wondering girls.

They found themselves in a lofty and very spacious hall. At the end was a kind of throne—a red velvet divan, semicircular under a canopy of red velvet. Statues stood on either side: behind them was a great organ: upon the walls were pictures. Above the pictures were trophies in arms, tapestry carpets, all kinds of beautiful things. Above the entrance was a gallery for musicians; and on either side were doors leading to places of which they knew nothing.

Miss Kennedy led the way to the semicircular divan at the end. She took the central place, and motioned the girls to arrange themselves about her. The effect of this little group sitting by themselves and in silence, at the end of the great hall, was very strange and wonderful.

‘My dears,’ she said after a moment—and the girls saw that her eyes were full of tears—

‘my dears, I have got a wonderful story to tell you. Listen.

‘There was a girl, once, who had the great misfortune to be born rich. It is a thing which many people desire. She, however, who had it, knew what a misfortune it might become to her. For the possessor of great wealth, more especially if it be a woman, attracts all the designing and wicked people in the world, all the rogues and all the pretended philanthropists to her, as wasps are attracted by honey; and presently, by sad experience, she gets to look on all mankind as desirous only of robbing and deceiving her. This is a dreadful condition of mind to fall into, because it stands in the way of love and friendship and trust, and all the sweet confidences which make us happy.

‘This girl’s name was Messenger. Now, when she was quite young she knew what was going to happen, unless she managed somehow differently from other women in her unhappy position. And she determined as a first step to get rid of a large quantity of her wealth, so that the cupidity of the robbers might be diverted.

‘Now, she had a humble friend—only a

dressmaker—who, for reasons of her own, loved her, and would have served her if she could. And this dressmaker came to live at the East End of London.

‘And she saw that the girls who have to work for their bread are treated in such a way that slavery would be a better lot for most of them. For they have to work twelve hours in the day, and sometimes more : they sit in close, hot rooms, poisoned by gas : they get no change of position as the day goes on : they have no holiday, no respite, save on Sunday : they draw miserable wages, and they are indifferently fed. So that she thought one good thing Miss Messenger could do was to help those girls, and this was how our Association was founded.’

‘But we shall thank you, all the same,’ said Nelly.

‘Then another thing happened. There was a young—gentleman,’ Angela went on, ‘staying at the East End too. He called himself a working man, said he was the son of a Sergeant in the army, but everybody knew he was a gentleman. This dressmaker made his acquaintance, and talked with him a great deal.

He was full of ideas, and one day he proposed that we should have a Palace of Delight. It would cost a great deal of money; but they talked as if they had that sum, and more, at their disposal. They arranged it all: they provided for everything. When the scheme was fully drawn up, the dressmaker took it to Miss Messenger. Oh, my dear girls! this *is* the Palace of Delight. It is built as they proposed; it is finished; it is our own: and here is its inventor.'

She took Harry's hand. He stood beside her, gazing upon her impassioned face; but he was silent. 'It looks cold and empty now, but when you see it on the opening day; when you come here night after night; when you get to feel the place to be a part, and the best part, of your life, then remember that what Miss Messenger did was nothing compared with what this—this young gentleman did. For he invented it.'

'Now,' she said, rising—they were all too much astonished to make any demonstration—'now let us examine the building. This Hall is your great Reception Room. You will use it

for the ball nights, when you give your 'great dances : a thousand couples may dance here without crowding. On wet days it is to be the playground of the children. It will hold a couple of thousand, without jostling against each other. There is the gallery for the music, as soon as you have got any.'

She led the way to a door on the right.

'This,' she said, 'is your Theatre.'

'It was like a Roman theatre, being built in the form of a semicircle, tier above tier, having no distinction in places, save that some were nearer the stage and some farther off.

'Here,' she said, 'you will act. Do not think that players will be found for you. If you want a theatre you must find your own actors. If you want an orchestra you must find your own for your theatre, because in this place everything will be done by yourselves.'

They came out of the Theatre. There was one other door on that side of the Hall.

'This,' said Angela, opening it, 'is the Concert Room. It has an organ and a piano and a platform. When you have got people who can play and sing you will give concerts.'

They crossed the Hall. On the other side were two more great rooms, each as big as the Theatre and the Concert Room. One was a gymnasium, fitted up with bars and ropes and parallel rods and trapezes.

‘This is for the young men,’ said Angela. ‘They will be stimulated by prizes to become good gymnasts. The other room is the Library. Here they may come, when they please, to read and study.’

It was a noble room, fitted with shelves and the beginning of a great library.

‘Let us go upstairs,’ said Angela.

Upstairs the rooms were all small, but there were a great many of them.

Thus there were billiard-rooms, card-rooms, rooms with chess, dominoes, and backgammon tables laid out, smoking-rooms for men alone, tea and coffee rooms, rooms where women could sit by themselves if they pleased, and a room where all kinds of refreshments were to be procured. Above these was a second floor, which was called the School. This consisted of a great number of quite small rooms, fitted with desks, tables, and whatever else might be neces-

sary. Some of these rooms were called music-rooms, and were intended for instruction and practice on different instruments. Others were for painting, drawing, sculpture, modelling, wood-carving, leather-work, brasswork, embroidery, lacework, and all manner of small arts.

‘In the Palace of Delight,’ said Angela, ‘we shall not be like a troop of revellers, thinking of nothing but dance and song and feasting. We shall learn something every day ; we shall all belong to some class. Those of us who know already will teach the rest. And oh ! the best part of all has to be told. Everything in the Palace will be done for nothing, except the mere cleaning and keeping in order. And if anybody is paid anything, it will be at the rate of a working man’s wage—no more. For this is our own Palace, the club of the working people ; we will not let anybody make money out of it : we shall use it for ourselves, and we shall make our enjoyment by ourselves.

‘All this is provided in the deed of trust by which Miss Messenger hands over the building to the people. There are three trustees. One of these, of course, is you—Mr. Goslett.’

‘I have been so lost in amazement,’ said Harry, ‘that I have been unable to speak. Is this, in very truth, the Palace of Delight that we have battled over so long and so often?’

‘It is none other. And you are a trustee to carry out the intentions of the founder—yourself.’

They went downstairs again to the great Hall.

‘Captain Sorensen,’ Angela whispered, ‘will you go home with the girls? I will follow in a few minutes.’

Harry and Angela were left behind in the Hall.

She called the man in charge of the electric light, and said something to him. Then he went away and turned down the light, and they were standing in darkness, save for the bright moon which shone through the windows and fell upon the white statues and made them look like two ghosts themselves standing among rows of other ghosts.

‘Harry,’ said Angela.

‘Do not mock me,’ he replied, ‘I am in a dream. This is not real. The place——’

‘It is your own Palace of Delight. It will

be given to the people in a fortnight. Are you pleased with your creation?’

‘Pleased? And you?’

‘I am greatly pleased. Harry’—it was the first time she had called him by his Christian name,—‘I promised you—I promised I would tell you—I would tell you—if the time should come——’

‘Has the time come? Oh, my dear love, has the time come?’

‘There is nothing in the way. But oh!—Harry—are you in the same mind? No—wait a moment.’ She held him by the wrists: ‘Remember what you are doing. Will you choose a lifetime of work among working people? You can go back, now, to your old life; but—perhaps—you will not be able to go back, then.’

‘I have chosen, long ago. You know my choice—oh! love—my love.’

‘Then, Harry, if it will make you happy—are you quite sure it will?—you shall marry me on the day when the Palace is opened.’

‘You are sure,’ she said presently, ‘that

you can love me, though I am only a dress-maker?’

‘Could I love you,’ he replied passionately, ‘if you were anything else?’

‘You have never told me,’ he said presently, ‘your Christian name.’

‘It is Angela.’

‘Angela! I should have known it could have been no other. Angela, kind Heaven, surely, sent you down to stay awhile with me. If in time to come you should be ever unhappy with me, dear, if you should not be able to bear any longer with my faults, you would leave me and go back to the heaven whence you came.’

They parted, that night, on the steps of Mrs. Bormalack’s dingy old boarding-house, to both so dear. But Harry, for half the night, paced the pavement, trying to calm the tumult of his thoughts. ‘A life of work—with Angela—with Angela? Why, how small, how pitiful seemed all other kinds of life in which Angela was not concerned!’

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MY LADY SWEET.

My story, alas! has come to an end, according to the nature of all earthly things. The love vows are exchanged, the girl has given herself to the man—rich or poor. My friends, if you come to think of it, no girl is so rich that she can give more, or so poor that she can give less, than herself; and in love one asks not for more or less. Even the day is appointed, and nothing is going to happen which will prevent the blessed wedding bells from ringing, or the clergyman from the sacred joining together of man and of maid, till death do part them. What more to tell? We ought to drop the curtain while the moonlight pours through the windows of the silent palace upon the lovers, while the gods and goddesses, nymphs, naiads, and oreads in marble look on in sympathetic joy. They, too, in the far-off ages, among the

woods and springs of Hellas, lived and loved, though their forests know them no more. Yet, because this was no ordinary marriage, and because we are sorry to part with Angela before the day when she begins her wedded life, we must fain tell of what passed in that brief fortnight before the palace was opened, and Angela's great and noble dream became a reality.

There was, first of all, a great deal of business to be set in order. Angela had interviews with her lawyers, and settlements had to be drawn up about which Harry knew nothing, though he would have to sign them; then there were the trust deeds for the palace. Angela named Harry, Dick Coppin, the old Chartist, now her firm and fast friend, and Lord Jocelyn, as joint trustees. They were to see, first of all, that no one got anything out of the palace unless it might be workmen's wages for work done. They were to carry out the spirit of the house in making the place support and feed itself, so that whatever amusements, plays, dances, interludes, or mummeries, were set afoot, all might be by the people themselves for themselves; and they were to do their

utmost to keep out the discordant elements of politics, religion, and party controversy.

All the girls knew by this time that Miss Kennedy was to be married on the second of March—the day when the palace was to be opened. They also learned, because the details were arranged and talked over every evening, that the opening would be on a very grand scale indeed. Miss Messenger herself was coming to hand it over in person to the trustees on behalf of the people of Stepney and Whitechapel. There was to be the acting of a play in the new theatre, a recital on the new organ, the performance of a concert in the new concert-room, playing all the evening long by a military band, some sort of general entertainment, and the whole was to be terminated by a gigantic supper given by Miss Messenger herself, to which fifteen hundred guests were bidden; namely, first, all the employés of the brewery with their wives, if they had any, from the Chief Brewer and the Chief Accountant down to the humblest boy on the establishment; and secondly, all the girls of the Association, with two or three guests for

each; and thirdly, a couple of hundred or so chosen from a list drawn up by Dick Coppin and the cobbler and Harry.

As for Harry, he had now, by Angela's recommendation, resigned his duties at the Brewery, in order to throw his whole time into the arrangement for the opening day; and this so greatly occupied him that he sometimes even forgot what the day would mean to him. The invitations were sent in Miss Messenger's own name. They were all accepted, although there was naturally some little feeling of irritation at the Brewery when it became known that there was to be a general sitting down of all together. Miss Messenger also expressed her wish that the only beverage at the supper should be Messenger's beer, and that of the best quality. The banquet, in imitation of the Lord Mayor's dinner on the ninth of November, was to be a cold one, and solid, with plenty of ices, jellies, puddings, and fruit. But there was something said about glasses of wine for every guest after supper.

'I suppose,' said Angela, talking over this pleasant disposition of things with Harry, 'that

she means one or two toasts to be proposed. The first should be to the success of the Palace. The second, I think'—and she blushed—'will be the health of you, Harry, and of me.'

'I think so much of you,' said Harry, 'all day long, that I never think of Miss Messenger at all. Tell me what she is like, this giver and dispenser of princely gifts. I suppose she really is the owner of boundless wealth?'

'She has several millions, if you call that boundless. She has been a very good friend to me, and will continue so.'

'You know her well?'

'I know her very well. Oh, Harry, do not ask me any more about her or myself. When we are married I will tell you all about the friendship of Miss Messenger to me. You trust me, do you not?'

'Trust you! Oh, Angela!'

'My secret, such as it is, is not a shameful one, Harry; and it has to do with the very girl, this Miss Messenger. Leave me with it till the day of our wedding. I wonder how far your patience will endure my secrets? for

here is another. You know that I have a little money?’

‘I am afraid, my Angela,’ said Harry, laughing, ‘that you must have made a terrible hole in it since you came here. Little or much, what does it matter to us? Haven’t we got the Two Thousand? Think of that tremendous lump.’

‘What can it matter?’ she cried. ‘Oh, Harry, I thank Heaven for letting me, too, have this great gift of sweet and disinterested love. I thought it would never come to me.’

‘To whom, then, should it come?’

‘Don’t, Harry, or—yes—go on thinking me all that you say, because it may help to make me all that you think. But that is not what I wanted to say. Would you mind very much, Harry, if I asked you to take my name?’

‘I will take any name you wish, Angela. If I am your husband, what does it matter about any other name?’

‘And then one other thing, Harry. Will your guardian give his consent?’

‘Yes, I can answer for him that he will. And he will come to the wedding if I ask him.’

‘Then ask him, Harry.’

‘So,’ said Lord Jocelyn, ‘the dressmaker has relented, has she? Why, that is well. And I am to give my consent? My dear boy, I only want you to be happy. Beside, I am quite sure and certain that you will be happy.’

‘Everybody is, if he marries the woman he loves,’ said the young man sententiously.

‘Yes—yes, if he goes on loving the woman he has married. However, Harry, you have my best wishes and my consent, since you are good enough to ask for it. Wait a bit.’ He got up and began to search about in drawers and desks. ‘I must give your *fiancée* a present, Harry. See—here is something good. Will you give her, with my best love and good wishes, this? It was once my mother’s.’

Harry looked at the gaud, set with pearls and rubies in old-fashioned style.

‘Is it not,’ he asked, ‘rather too splendid for a—poor people in our position?’

Lord Jocelyn laughed aloud.

‘Nothing,’ he said, ‘can be too splendid for a beautiful woman. Give it her, Harry, and tell her I am glad she has consented to make you happy. Tell her I am more than glad, Harry. Say that I most heartily thank her. Yes, thank her. Tell her that. Say that I thank her from my heart.’

As the day drew near the girls became possessed of a great fear. It seemed to all as if things were going to undergo some great and sudden change. They knew that the house was secured to them free of rent; but they were going to lose their queen, that presiding spirit who not only kept them together, but also kept them happy. In her presence there were no little tempers, and jealousies were forgotten. When she was with them they were all on their best behaviour. Now it is an odd thing in girls, and I really think myself privileged, considering my own very small experience of the sex, in being the first to have discovered this important truth—that, whereas to boys good behaviour is too often a *gêne* and a bore, girls prefer behaving well. They are happiest when they are good,

nicely dressed, and sitting all in a row with company manners. But who, when Miss Kennedy went away, would lead them in the drawing-room? The change, however, was going to be greater than they knew or guessed the drawing-room itself would become before many days a thing of the past, but the Palace would take its place.

They all brought gifts: they were simple things, but they were offered with willing and grateful hearts. Rebekah brought the one volume of her father's library which was well bound. It was a work written in imitation of Hervey's 'Meditations,' and dealt principally with tombs, and was therefore peculiarly appropriate as a wedding present. Nelly brought a ring which had been her mother's, and was so sacred to her that she felt it *must* be given to Miss Kennedy; the other girls gave worked handkerchiefs, and collars, and such little things.

Angela looked at the table on which she had spread all her wedding presents: the plated teapot, from Mrs. Bormalack; the girls' work; Nelly's ring; Rebekah's book; Lord

Jocelyn's bracelet. She was happier with these trifles than if she had received in Portman Square the hundreds of gifts and jewelled things which would have poured in for the young heiress.

And in the short fortnight she thought for everybody. Josephus received a message that he might immediately retire on the pension which he would have received had he been fortunate in promotion, and been compelled to go by ill-health: in other words, he was set free with three hundred pounds a year for life. He may now be seen any day in the Mile End Road or on Stepney Green, dressed in the fashion of a young man of twenty-one or so, walking with elastic step, because he is so young, yet manifesting a certain gravity, as becomes one who attends the evening lectures of the Beaumont Institute in French and arithmetic, and takes a class on the Sabbath in connection with the Wesleyan body. After all, a man is only as old as he feels; and why should not Josephus, whose youth was cruelly destroyed, feel young again, now that his honour has been restored to him?

On the morning before the wedding, Angela paid two visits of considerable importance.

The first was to Daniel Fagg, to whom she carried a small parcel. 'My friend,' she said, 'I have observed your impatience about your book. Your publisher thought that, as you are inexperienced in correcting proofs, it would be best to have the work done for you. And here, I am truly happy to say, is the book itself.'

He tore the covering from the book and seized it, as a mother would seize her child.

'My book !' he gasped, 'my book !'

Yes, his book ; bound in sober cloth, with an equilateral triangle on the cover for simple ornament. 'The Primitive Alphabet, By Daniel Fagg.' 'My book !'

Angela explained to him that his passage to Melbourne was taken, and that he would sail in a week ; and that a small sum of money would be put into his hands on landing : and that a hundred copies of the book would be sent to Australia for him, with more if he wanted them. But she talked to idle ears, for Daniel was turning over the leaves and devouring the contents of his book.

‘At all events,’ said Angela, ‘I have made one man happy.’

Then she walked to the Trinity Almshouse, and sought her old friend Captain Sorensen.

To him she told her whole story from the very beginning, begging only that he would keep her secret till the next evening.

‘But, of course,’ said the sailor, ‘I knew, all along, that you were a lady born and bred. You might deceive the folk here, who’ve no chance, poor things, of knowing a lady when they see one—how should they? But you could not deceive a man who’s had his quarter-deck full of ladies. The only question in my mind was why you did it.’

‘You did not think that what Bunker said was true—did you, Captain Sorensen?’

‘Nay,’ he replied. ‘Bunker never liked you; and how I am to thank you enough for all you’ve done for my poor girl——’

‘Thank me by continuing to be my dear friend and adviser,’ said Angela. ‘If I thought it would pleasure you to live out of this place——’

‘No, no,’ said the Captain, ‘I could not

take your money ; any one may accept the provision of the asylum and be grateful.'

'I knew you would say so. Stay on, then, Captain Sorensen. And as regards Nelly, my dear and fond Nelly——'

It needs not to tell what she said and promised on behalf of Nelly.

And at the house the girls were trying on the new white frocks and white bonnets in which they were to go to the wedding. They were all bridesmaids, but Nelly had the post of honour.

CHAPTER XLIX.

‘UPROUSE YE THEN, MY MERRY, MERRY MEN.’

AT nine in the morning Harry presented himself at the House, no longer his own, for the signing of certain papers. The place was closed for a holiday, but the girls were already assembling in the show-room, getting their dresses laid out, trying on their gloves, and chattering like birds up in the branches on a fine spring morning. He found Angela sitting with an elderly gentleman—none other than the senior partner in the firm of her solicitors. He had a quantity of documents on the table before him, and as Harry opened the door he heard these remarkable words:—

‘So the young man does not know—even at the eleventh hour!’

What it was he would learn, Harry cared not to inquire. He had been told that there

was a secret of some sort which he would learn in the course of the day.

‘These papers, Harry, said his bride, ‘are certain documents which you have to sign, connected with that little fortune of which I told you.’

‘I hope,’ said Harry, ‘that the fortune, whatever it is, has been all settled upon yourself absolutely.’

‘You will find, young gentleman,’ said the solicitor gravely, ‘that ample justice—generous justice—has been done you. Very well, I will say no more.’

‘Do you want me to sign without reading, Angela?’

‘If you will so far trust me.’

He took the pen and signed where he was told to sign, without reading one word. If he had been ordered to sign away his life and liberty, he would have done so blindly and cheerfully at Angela’s bidding. The deed was signed, and the act of signature was witnessed.

So that was done. There now remained only the ceremony. While the solicitor, who



“ Do you deliberately choose a life of work and ambition—with—perhaps—poverty—

evidently disliked the whole proceeding, as irregular and dangerous, was putting up the papers, Angela took her lover's hands in hers, and looked into his face with her frank and searching look.

‘ You do not repent, my poor Harry ? ’

‘ Repent ? ’

‘ You might have done so much better : you might have married a lady——’

The solicitor, overhearing these words, sat down and rubbed his nose with an unprofessional smile.

‘ Shall I not marry a lady ? ’

‘ You might have found a rich bride : you might have led a lazy life, with nothing to do, instead of which—oh ! Harry, there is still time. We are not due at the church for half an hour yet. Think. Do you deliberately choose a life of work and ambition—with—perhaps—poverty ? ’

At this point the solicitor rose from his chair and walked softly to the window, where he remained for five minutes looking out upon Stepney Green with his back to the lovers. If Harry had been watching him, he would have

remarked a curious tremulous movement of the shoulders.

‘There is one thing more, Harry, that I have to ask you.’

‘Of course, you have only to ask me, whatever it is. Could I refuse you anything, who will give me so much?’

Their fingers were interlaced, their eyes were looking into each other. No; he could refuse her nothing.

‘I give you much? Oh! Harry—what is a woman’s gift of herself?’

Harry restrained himself. The solicitor might be sympathetic; but, on the whole, it was best to act as if he was not. Law has little to do with Love: Cupid has never yet been represented with the long gown.

‘It is a strange request, Harry. It is connected with my—my little foolish secret. You will let me go away directly the service is over, and you will consent not to see me again until the evening, when I shall return. You, with all the girls, will meet me in the porch of the Palace at seven o’clock exactly. And, as Miss Messenger will come too, you will make your—

perhaps your last appearance—my poor boy—in the character of a modern English gentleman in evening dress. Tell your best man that he is to give his arm to Nelly: the other girls will follow two and two. Oh, Harry, the first sound of the organ in your Palace will be your own Wedding March: the first festival in your Palace will be in your own honour. Is not that what it should be?’

‘In your honour, dear, not mine. And Miss Messenger? Are we to give no honour to her who built the Palace?’

‘Oh! yes—yes—yes.’ She put the question by with a careless gesture. ‘But any one who happened to have the money could do such a simple thing. The honour is yours because you invented it.’

‘From your hands, Angela, I will take all the honour that you please to give. So am I doubly honoured.’

There were no wedding bells at all: the organ was mute: the Parish Church of Stepney was empty: the spectators of the marriage were Mrs. Bormalack and Captain Sorensen,

besides the girls and the bridegroom, and Dick his best man. The Captain in the Salvation Army might have been present as well; he had been asked, but he was lying on the sick bed from which he was never to rise again. Lord and Lady Davenant were there: the former sleek, well contented, well dressed in broadcloth of the best; the latter agitated, restless, humiliated, because she had lost the thing she came across the Atlantic to claim, and was going home, after the splendour of the last three months, to the monotonous levels of Canaan City. Who could love Canaan City after the West End of London? What woman would look forward with pleasure to the dull and uneventful days, the local politics, the chapel squabbles, the little gatherings for tea and supper, after the enjoyment of a carriage and pair and unlimited theatres, operas, and concerts, and footmen, and such dinners as the average American, or the average Englishman either, seldom arrives at seeing, even in visions? Sweet content was gone: and though Angela meant well, and it was kind of her to afford the ambitious lady a glimpse of that great world

into which she desired to enter, the sight—even this Pisgah glimpse—of a social Paradise to which she could never belong, destroyed her peace of mind, and she will for the rest of her life lie on a rock deploring. Not so her husband: his future is assured; he can eat and drink plentifully; he can sleep all the morning undisturbed; he is relieved of the anxieties connected with his Case: and though the respect due to rank is not recognised in the States, he has to bear none of its responsibilities, and has altogether abandoned the Grand Manner. At the same time, as one who very nearly became a British Peer, his position in Canaan City is enormously raised.

They, then, were in the church. They drove thither, not in Miss Messenger's carriage, but with Lord Jocelyn.

They arrived a quarter of an hour before the ceremony. When the curate who was to perform the ceremony arrived, Lord Jocelyn sought him in the vestry and showed him a special licence by which it was pronounced lawful, and even laudable, for Harry Goslett,

bachelor, to take unto wife Angela Marsden Messenger, spinster.

And at sight of that name did the curate's knees begin to tremble, and his hands to shake.

‘Angela Marsden Messenger? Is it, then,’ he asked, ‘the great heiress?’

‘It is none other,’ said Lord Jocelyn. ‘And she marries my ward—here is my card—by special licence.’

‘But—but—is it a clandestine marriage?’

‘Not at all. There are reasons why Miss Messenger desires to be married in Stepney. With them we have nothing to do. She has, of late, associated herself with many works of benevolence, but anonymously. In fact, my dear sir’—here Lord Jocelyn looked profoundly knowing—‘my ward, the bridegroom, has always known her under another name, and even now does not know whom he is marrying. When we sign the books, we must, just to keep the secret a little longer, manage that he shall write his own name without seeing the names of the bride.’

This seemed very irregular in the eyes of the curate, and at first he was for referring the

matter to the rector, but finally gave in, on the understanding that he was to be no party to any concealment.

And presently the wedding party walked slowly up the aisle, and Harry, to his great astonishment, saw his bride on Lord Jocelyn's arm. There were cousins of the Messengers in plenty who should have done this duty, but Angela would invite none of them. She came alone to Stepney ; she lived and worked in the place alone ; she wanted no consultation or discussion with the cousins ; she would tell them when all was done ; and she knew very well that so great an heiress as herself could do nothing but what is right, when one has time to recover from the shock, and to settle down and think things over.

No doubt, though we have nothing to do with the outside world in this story, there was a tremendous rustling of skirts, shaking of hands, tossing of curls, wagging of tongues, and uplifting of hands, the next morning when Angela's cards were received, and the news was in all the papers. And there was such a run upon interjections that the vocabulary broke

down, and people were fain to cry to one another in foreign tongues.

For thus the announcement ran :—

‘On Thursday, March 20, at the Parish Church, Stepney, Harry, son of the late Samuel Goslett, Sergeant in the 120th Regiment of the Line, to Angela Marsden, daughter of the late John Marsden Messenger, and granddaughter of the late John Messenger, of Portman Square and Whitechapel.’

This was a pretty blow among the cousins. The greatest heiress in England, whom they had hoped would marry a duke, or a marquis, or an earl at least, had positively and actually married the son of a common soldier—well, a non-commissioned officer—the same thing. What did it mean? What *could* it mean?

Others, who knew Harry and his story, who had sympathy with him on account of his many good qualities; who owned that the obscurity of his birth was but an accident shared with him by many of the most worthy, excellent, brilliant, useful, well-bred, delightful men of the world; rejoiced over the strange irony of Fate which had first lifted this soldier’s

son out of the gutter, and then, with apparent malignity, dropped him back again, only, however, to raise him once more far higher than before. For, indeed, the young man was now rich—with his vats and his mashtubs, his millions of casks, his Old and his Mild and his Bitter, and his Family at nine shillings the nine-gallon cask, and his accumulated millions, ‘beyond the potential dream of avarice.’ If he chooses to live more than half his time in Whitechapel, that is no concern of anybody’s; and if his wife chooses to hold a sort of court at the abandoned East, to surround herself with people unheard of in society, not to say out of it, why should she not? Any of the Royal princes might have done the same thing if they had chosen and had been well advised. Further, if, between them, Angela and her husband have established a superior Aquarium, a glorified Crystal Palace, in which all the shows are open, all the performers are drilled and trained amateurs, and all the work actually is done for nothing; in which the management is by the people themselves, who will have no interference from priest or parson, rector or curate, philanthro-

pist or agitator ; and no patronage from societies, well-intentioned young ladies, meddling benevolent persons and officious promoters, starters, and shovers along, with half an eye fixed on heaven and the remaining eye and a half on their own advancement ; if, in fact, they choose to do these things, why not ? It is an excellent way of spending their time, and a change from the monotony of society.

Again, it is said that Harry, now Harry Messenger, by the provision of old John Messenger's will, is the President, or the Chairman, or the Honorary Secretary, in fact, the spring and stay and prop, of a new and most formidable Union or Association, which threatens, unless it be nipped in the bud, very considerable things of the greatest importance to the country. It is, in fact, a League of Working Men for the Promotion and Advancement of their own interests. Its Prospectus sets forth that, having looked in vain, among the candidates for the House of Commons, for any representative who had been in the past, or was likely to be in the future, of the slightest use to them in the House ; having found that neither Conservatives,

nor Liberals, nor Radicals, have ever been, or are ever likely to be, prepared with any real measure which should in the least concern themselves and their own wants; and fully recognising the fact that in the Debates of the House the interests of labour and the duties of Government towards the labouring classes are never recognised or understood; the working men of the country hereby form themselves into a General League or Union, which shall have no other object whatever than the study of their own rights and interests. The question of wages will be left to the different Unions, except in such cases where there is no Union, or where the men are inarticulate (as in the leading case, now some ten years old, of the gas stokers), through ignorance and drink. And the immediate questions before the Union will be, first, the dwelling-houses of the working men, which are to be made clean, safe, and healthy; next, their food and drink, which are to be unadulterated, pure, and genuine, and are to pass through no more hands than is necessary, and to be distributed at the actual cost price without the intervention of small shops:

next, instruction, for which purpose the working men will *elect their own School Boards*, and burn all the foolish reading books at present in use, and abolish spelling as a part of education, and teach the things necessary for all trades : next, clothing, which will be made for them by their own men working for themselves, without troubling the employers of labour at all : next, a newspaper of their own, which will refuse any place to political agitators, leaders, partisans, and professional talkers, and be devoted to the questions which really concern working men, and especially the question of how best to employ the Power which is in their hands, and report continually what is doing, what must be done, and how it must be done. And lastly, emigration, so that in every family it shall be considered necessary for some to go, and the whole country shall be mapped out into districts, and only a certain number be allowed to remain.

Now, the world being so small as it is, and Englishmen and Scotchmen being so masterful that they must needs go straight to the front and stay there, it cannot but happen that the

world will presently—that is, in two generations, or three at the most—be overrun with the good old English blood: whereupon until the round earth gets too small, which will not happen for another ten thousand years or so, there will be the purest, most delightful, and most heavenly Millennium. Rich people may come into it if they please, but they will not be wanted: in fact, rich people will die out, and it will soon come to be considered an unhappy thing, as it undoubtedly is, to be born rich.

Lastly, the Union will devote part of its energies to the consideration of how life may be made happy.

.
—— ‘Whos daughters ye are,’ concluded the curate, closing his book, ‘as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.’

He led the way into the vestry, where the book lay open, and sitting at the table he made the proper entries.

Then Harry took his place and signed. Now, behold! as he took the pen in his hand, Lord Jocelyn artfully held blotting-paper in readiness, and in such a manner as to hide the name

of the bride: then Angela signed: then the witnesses, Lord Jocelyn and Captain Sorensen. And then there were shakings of hand and kissings. And before they came away the curate ventured timidly to whisper congratulations, and that he had no idea of the honour—— And then Angela stopped him, and bade him to her wedding feast that evening at the new Palace of Delight.

Then Lord Jocelyn distributed largess, the largest kind of largess, among the people of the church.

But it surely was the strangest of weddings. For when they reached the church door the bride and bridegroom kissed each other, and then he placed her in the carriage, in which the Davenants and Lord Jocelyn also seated themselves, and so they drove off.

‘We shall see her again to-night,’ said Harry. ‘Come, Dick, we have got a long day to get through—seven hours. Let us go for a walk. I can’t sit down: I can’t rest: I can’t do anything. Let us go for a walk, and wrangle.’

They left the girls and strode away, and

did not return until it was past six o'clock, and already growing dark.

The girls, in dreadful lowness of spirits, and feeling as flat as so many pancakes, returned to their house and sat down with their hands in their laps, to do nothing for seven hours. Did one ever hear that the maidens at a marriage—do the customs of any country present an example of such a thing—returned to the bride's house without either bride or bridegroom? Did one ever hear of a marriage where the groom left the bride at the church door, and went away for a six hours' walk?

As for Captain Sorensen, he went to the Palace and pottered about, getting snubbed by the persons in authority. There was still much to be done before the evening, but there was time: all would be done. Presently he went away; but he, too, was restless and agitated: he could not rest at home: the possession of the secret, the thought of his daughter's future, the strange and unlooked-for happiness that had come to him in his old age—these things agitated him; nor could even his fiddle bring

him any consolation ; and the peacefulness of the Alms-house, which generally soothed him, this day irritated him. Therefore he wandered about, and presently appeared at the House, where he took dinner with the girls, and they talked about what would happen.

The first thing that happened was the arrival of a cart—a spring cart—with the name of a Regent Street firm upon it. The men took out a great quantity of parcels and brought them into the show-room. All the girls ran down to see what it meant, because on so great a day everything, said Nelly, must mean something.

‘ Name of Armitage ? ’ asked the man. ‘ This is for you, Miss.—Name of Sorensen ? This is for you.’ And so on, a parcel for every one of the girls.

Then he went away, and they all looked at each other.

‘ Hadn’t you better,’ asked Captain Sorensen, ‘ open the parcels, girls ? ’

They opened them.

‘ Oh——h ! ’

Behold ! for every girl such a present as

none of them had ever imagined ! The masculine pen cannot describe the sweet things which they found there ; not silks and satins, but pretty things ; with boots, because dressmakers are apt to be shabby in the matter of boots ; and with handkerchiefs and pretty scarves and gloves and serviceable things of all sorts.

More than this : there was a separate parcel tied up in white paper for every girl, and on it, in pencil, ‘For the wedding supper at the Palace of Delight.’ And in it gauze, or lace, for bridesmaids’ head-dress, and white kid gloves, and a necklace with a locket, and inside the locket a portrait of Miss Kennedy, and outside her Christian name, Angela. Also for each girl a little note, ‘For ——, with Miss Messenger’s love ;’ but for Nelly, whose parcel was like Benjamin’s mess, the note was, ‘For Nelly, with Miss Messenger’s kindest love.’

‘That,’ said Rebekah, but without jealousy, ‘is because you were Miss Kennedy’s favourite. Well ! Miss Messenger *must* be fond of her, and no wonder !’

‘No wonder at all,’ said Captain Sorensen.

‘And nobody guessed. Nobody had the least suspicion.

While they were all admiring and wondering Mrs. Bormalack ran over breathless.

‘My dears!’ she cried, ‘look what’s come!’

Nothing less than a beautiful black silk dress.

‘Now go away, Captain Sorensen,’ she said; ‘you men are only hindering. And we’ve got to try on things. Oh! good gracious! To think that Miss Messenger would remember me, of all people in the world! To be sure, Mr. Bormalack was one of her collectors, and she may have heard about me——’

‘No,’ said Rebekah, ‘it is through Miss Kennedy; no one has been forgotten who knew her.’

At seven o’clock that evening the great hall of the Palace was pretty well filled with guests. Some of them, armed with white wands, acted as stewards, and it was understood that on the arrival of Miss Messenger a lane was to be formed and the procession to

the dais at the end of the hall was to pass through that lane.

Outside, in the vestibule, stood the wedding party waiting: the bridegroom with his best man, and the bridesmaids in their white dresses, flowing gauze and necklaces, and gloves, and flowers—a very sweet and beautiful bevy of girls; Harry for the last time in his life, he thought with a sigh, in evening dress. Within the hall there were strange rumours flying about. It was said that Miss Messenger herself had been married that morning, and that the procession would be for her wedding; but others knew better: it was Miss Kennedy's wedding; she had married Harry Goslett, the man they called Gentleman Jack; and Miss Kennedy, everybody knew, was patronised by Miss Messenger.

At ten minutes past seven, two carriages drew up. From the first of these descended Harry's bride, led by Lord Jocelyn; and from the second the Davenants.

Yes, Harry's bride. But whereas in the morning she had been dressed in a plain white frock and white bonnet like her bridesmaids;

she was now arrayed in white satin, mystic, wonderful, with white veil and white flowers, and round her white throat a necklace of sparkling diamonds, and diamonds in her hair.

Harry stepped forward with beating heart.

‘Take her, boy,’ said Lord Jocelyn proudly. ‘But you have married—not Miss Kennedy at all—but Angela Messenger.’

Harry took his bride’s hand in a kind of stupor. What did Lord Jocelyn mean?

‘Forgive me, Harry,’ she said, ‘say you forgive me.’

Then he raised her veil and kissed her forehead before them all. But he could not speak, because all in a moment the sense of what this would mean poured upon his brain in a great wave, and he would fain have been alone.

It was Miss Kennedy indeed, but glorified into a great lady ; oh !—oh—MISS MESSENGER !

The girls, frightened, were shrinking together ; even Rebekah was afraid at the great and mighty name of Messenger.

Angela went among them, and kissed them

all with words of encouragement. 'Can you not love me, Nelly,' she said, 'as well when I am rich as when I was poor?'

Then the chief officers in the Brewery advanced, offering congratulations in timid accents, because they knew now that Miss Kennedy the dressmaker, of whom such hard things had been sometimes said in their own presence and by their own wives, was no other than the sole partner in the Brewery, and that her husband had worked among them for a daily wage. What did these things mean? They made respectable men afraid. One person there was, however, who at sight of Miss Messenger, for whom he was waiting with anxious heart, having a great desire to present his own case of unrewarded zeal, turned pale, and broke through the crowd with violence and fled. It was Uncle Bunker.

And then the stewards appeared at the open doors, and the procession was formed.

First the stewards themselves—being all clerks of the Brewery—walked proudly at the head, carrying their white wands like rifles. Next came Harry and the bride, at sight of

whom the guests shouted and roared; next came Dick Coppin with Nelly, and Lord Jocelyn with Rebekah, and the Chief Brewer with Lady Davenant, of course in her black velvet and war paint, and Lord Davenant with Mrs. Bormalack, and the Chief Accountant with another bridesmaid, and Captain Sorensen with another, and then the rest.

Then the organ burst into a Wedding March, rolling and pealing about the walls and roof of the mighty hall, and amid its melodious thunder, and the shouts of the wedding guests, Harry led his bride slowly through the lane of curious and rejoicing faces, till they reached the dais.

When all were arranged with the bride seated in the middle, her husband standing at her right and the bridesmaids grouped behind them, Lord Jocelyn stepped to the front and read in a loud voice part of the deed of gift, which he then gave with a profound bow to Angela, who placed it in her husband's hands.

Then she stepped forward and raised her veil, and stood before them all, beautiful as the

day, and with tears in her eyes. Yet she spoke in firm and clear accents which all could hear. It was her first and last public speech: for Angela belongs to that rapidly diminishing body of women who prefer to let the men do all the public speaking.

‘My dear friends,’ she said, ‘my kind friends: I wish first that you should clearly understand that this Palace has been invented and designed for you by my husband. All I have done is to build it. Now it is yours, with all it contains. I pray God that it may be used worthily, and for the joy and happiness of all. I declare this Palace of Delight open, the property of the people, to be administered and governed by them and them alone, in trust for each other.’

This was all she said, and the people cheered again, and the organ played ‘God save the Queen.’

With this simple ceremony was the Palace of Delight thrown open to the world. What better beginning could it have than a wedding party? What better omen could there be than that the Palace, like the Garden of Eden,

should begin with the happiness of a wedded pair?

At this point there presented itself, to those who drew up the programme, a grave practical difficulty. It was this. The Palace could only be declared open in the Great Hall itself. Also, it could be only in the Great Hall that the banquet could take place. Now, how were the fifteen hundred guests to be got out of the way and amused while the tables were laid and the cloth spread? There could not be, it is true, the splendour and costly plate and *épergnes* and flowers of my Lord Mayor's great dinner, but ornament of some kind there must be upon the tables; and even with an army of drilled waiters it takes time to lay covers for fifteen hundred people.

But there was no confusion. Once more the procession was formed and marched round the hall, headed by the band of the Guards, visiting first the gymnasium, then the library, then the concert-room, and lastly the theatre. Here they paused, and the bridal party took their seats. The people poured in: when every

seat was taken the stewards invited the rest into the concert-room. In the theatre a little sparkling comedy was played: in the concert room a troupe of singers discoursed sweet madrigals and glees. Outside, the waiters ran backwards and forwards as busy as Diogenes with his tub, but more to the purpose.

When, in something over an hour, the performances were finished, the stewards found that the tables were laid, one running down the whole length of the hall, and shorter ones across the hall. Everybody had a card with his place upon it: there was no confusion, and while trumpeters blared a welcome, they all took their places in due order.

Angela and her husband sat in the middle of the long table; at Angela's left hand was Lord Jocelyn, at Harry's right Lady Davenant. Opposite the bride and bridegroom sat the Chief Brewer and the Chief Accountant. The bridesmaids spread out right and left. All Angela's friends and acquaintances of Stepney Green were there, except three. For old Mr. Maliphant was sitting as usual in the boarding-house, conversing with unseen persons and

laughing and brandishing a pipe ; and with him Daniel Fagg sat hugging his book. And in his own office sat Bunker, sick at heart. For he remembered his officious private letter to Miss Messenger, and he felt that he had, indeed, gone and done it.

The rest of the long table was filled up by the clerks and superior officers of the Brewery : at the shorter tables sat the rest of the guests, including even the draymen and errand-boys. And so the feast began, while the band of the Guards played for them.

It was a royal feast, with the most magnificent cold sirloins of roast beef and rounds of salt beef, legs of mutton, saddles of mutton, haunches of mutton, loins of veal, ribs of pork, legs of pork, great hams, huge turkeys, capons, fowls, ducks, and geese, all done to a turn ; so that the honest guests fell to with a mighty will, and wished that such a wedding might come once a month at least, with such a supper. And Messenger's beer, as much as you pleased, for everybody. At a moment like this, would one, even at the High Table, venture to ask, to say nothing of wishing for, aught but Messenger's beer ?

After the hacked and mangled remains of the first course were removed there came puddings, pies, cakes, jellies, ices, blanchmange, all kinds of delicious things.

And after this was done, and eating was stayed, and only the memory left of the enormous feed, the Chief Brewer rose and proposed in a few words the health of the bride and bridegroom. He said that it would be a lasting sorrow to all of them that they had not been present at the auspicious event of the morning ; but that it was in some measure made up to them by the happiness they had enjoyed together that evening. If anything, he added, could make them pray more heartily for the happiness of the bride, it would be the thought that she refused to be married from her house in the West End, but came to Stepney among the workmen and managers of her own Brewery, and preferred to celebrate her wedding feast in the magnificent hall which she had given to the people of the place. And he had one more good thing to tell them. Miss Messenger, when she gave that precious thing, her hand, retained her name. There would

still be a Messenger at the head of the good old House.

Harry replied in a few words, and the wedding cake went round. Then Dick Coppin proposed success to the Palace of Delight.

‘Harry,’ whispered Angela, ‘if you love me, speak now, from your very heart.’

He sprang to his feet, and spoke to the people as they had never heard any yet speak.

After telling them what the Palace was, what it was meant to be, a place for the happiness and recreation of all ; how they were to make their own amusements for themselves ; how there were class-rooms where all kinds of arts and accomplishments would be taught ; how, to ensure order and good behaviour, it was necessary that they should form their own volunteer police ; how there were to be no politics and no controversies within those walls, and how the management of all was left to committees of their own choosing, he said,—

‘Friends all, this is, indeed, such a thing as the world has never yet seen. You have been frequently invited to join together and combine for the raising of wages : you are continually

invited to follow leaders who promise to reform land laws, when you have no land and never will have any ; to abolish the House of Lords, in which you have no part, share, or lot ; to sweep away a Church which does not interfere with you ; but who have nothing—no, nothing to offer you, out of which any help or advantage will come to you. And you are always being told to consider life as a long period of resignation under inevitable suffering : and you are told to submit your reason, your will, yourselves, to authority, and all will be well with you. No one yet has given you the chance of making yourselves happy. In this place you will find, or you will make for yourselves, all the things which make the lives of the rich happy. Here you will have music, dancing, singing, acting, painting, reading, games of skill, games of chance, companionship, cheerfulness, light, warmth, comfort — everything. When these things have been enjoyed for a time they will become a necessity for you, and a part of the education for your young people. They will go on to desire other things which cannot be found by any others for you, but which must

be found by yourselves and for yourselves. My wife has placed in your hands the materials for earthly joy : it lies with you to learn how to use them : it lies with you to find what other things are necessary ; how the people who have all the Power there is, must find out what they want, and help themselves to it, standing shoulder to shoulder by means of that Power : how those enemies are not the rich, whom your brawlers in Whitechapel Road ignorantly accuse, but quite another kind—and you must find out for yourselves who these are. It is not by setting poor against rich, or by hardening the heart of rich against poor, that you will succeed : it is by independence and by knowledge. All sorts and conditions of men are alike. As are the vices of the rich, so are your own : as are your virtues, so are theirs. But, hitherto, the rich have had things which you could not get. Now all that is altered : in the Palace of Delight we are equal to the richest : there is nothing which we, too, cannot have : what they desire we desire ; what they have we shall have : we can all love ; we can all laugh ; we can all feel

the power of music ; we can dance and sing ; or we can sit in peace and meditate. In this Palace, as in the outer world, remember that you have the Power. The time for envy, hatred, and accusations has gone by : because we working men have, at last, all the Power there is to have. Let us use it well. But the Palace will be for joy and happiness, not for political wrangles. Brothers and sisters, we will no longer sit down in resignation : we will take the same joy in this world that the rich have taken. Life is short for us all : let us make the most of it for ourselves and for each other. There are so many joys within our reach ; there are so many miseries which we can abolish. In this house, which is a Temple of Praise, we shall all together continually be thinking how to bring more sunshine into our lives, more change, more variety, more happiness.'

A serious ending ; because Harry spoke from his heart. As he took his seat in deep silence, the organ broke forth again and played, while the people stood, the grand Old Hundredth Psalm.

A serious ending to the feast; but Life is serious.

.

Ten minutes later the bride rose, and the band played a joyful march, while the wedding procession once more formed and marched down the hall, and the people poured out into the streets to cheer, and Angela and her husband drove away for their honeymoon.

The Palace of Delight is in working order now, and Stepney is already transformed. A new period began on the opening night for all who were present. For the first time they understood that life may be happy: for the first time they resolved that they would find out for themselves the secret of happiness. The angel with the flaming sword has at last stepped from the gates of the earthly Paradise, and we may now enter therein and taste, unreprieved, of all the fruits except the apples of the Tree of Life—which has, indeed, been removed, long since, to another Place.

THE END.

July, 1882.



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